

## **ABSTRACTS**

**Nazneen Ahmed (Wadham College, U Oxford)**

### **Bangladeshi migrant narratives and the development of translocal nationalist communities**

Postcolonial studies has often focused upon the experiences of the migrant within the state of arrival, whilst the homeland has often receded into the background. However, an examination of Bangladeshi migrant narratives demonstrates that migrants negotiate between spaces, often utilising resources in the state of arrival when the homeland is threatened or troubled, and influencing and being influenced by events 'back home.' As my paper will demonstrate, in their active contributions to the resistance movement and Bengali literary production, migrant East Bengalis influenced the construction of Bangladeshi nationalism during the resistance to the Pakistani state between 1947-1971, which can also be considered a transnational movement. In representing and remembering the war of 1971 from tangential perspectives, oral history narratives and literature produced by Bangladeshi migrants, such as Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*, Adib Khan's *Seasonal Adjustments* and Tahmima Anam's *A Golden Age* also 'write back' to the homeland, strengthening the bonds of a translocal nationalist community.

**Vera Alexander (U Aarhus)**

### **Reading (weeding?) translocal gardenscapes**

Gardens are highly ambivalent spaces located on the border between wilderness and domestication, Englishness and otherness, nature and culture, private and public, science and romance, to list but some of many binary oppositions significant in the context of (post)colonial translocation. Gardens are also the products of numerous processes of dislocation and transplantation, and as such, feature in writings ranging from the poetic to the scientific.

While associated with leisure activities, peace, pastoral idylls, and idealising creativity, gardens in colonial and postcolonial writing have both ideological and political dimensions which are reflected on diverse levels. As a result, gardens do not merely function as setting but constitute spaces with a character and a history of their own which engage with the imposition of language and foreign control.

Focussing on Caribbean poets and writers, Olive Senior and Shani Mootoo, this paper will examine different representations of gardens as liminal spaces, where (de)colonising influences are negotiated.

Susan Arndt (U Frankfurt/M)

## Translocating nations in Black British literature and connecting spaces in the writing of Zadie Smith and Pauline Melville

Processes of colonialism and globalisation and the thus caused formation of migratory movements and new diasporas have had a catalytic effect on the formation of the world as a 'socio-cultural continuum',<sup>1</sup> to adopt Edward Kamau Brathwaite's formula for creolization. As for Édouard Glissant, this 'unceasing process of' cultural interweaving<sup>2</sup> and errant cultures is most pertinently expressed in Deleuze and Guattari's metaphor of the rhizome. '[It] maintains ... the idea of rootedness, but challenges that of a totalitarian root.'<sup>3</sup> It spreads out, encountering and cross-linking with others. In this manner, it presents itself in an unpredictable, fluid, and polyphonous way and hence is most suited as a metaphor for complex cultures and for processes of trans-location 'consisting of fractured and variously connected spaces'.<sup>4</sup>

Starting off with a theoretical reflection on the rhizomic nature of processes of translocation, in the second part of my paper I wish to focus on Black British literature, which is a centre of rhizomic identities and of the exploration of processes of trans-location. Positions which essentialize authenticity, cultural roots, monolingualism, the mother tongue as the language of the writer, and the nation are challenged, while fragmentation, decentralisation, heterogeneity, hybridity, de-territorialisation, and multilingualism are placed in the shifted centre.

First, I will discuss how conventional understanding of the (ownership of) a nation, its history and culture, is fragmented in Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*.<sup>5</sup> I will focus on Irie Jones's painful process of re-education – which has been provoked by her *white* teacher's insistence on being the only legitimate heir of William Shakespeare – that ultimately teaches her to affirm her rhizomic Black British identity and the politics of trans-location. Second, I will analyse Pauline Melville's short story 'Eat Labba and Drink *Creek Water*',<sup>6</sup> focusing on the protagonist's struggle against national, cultural, and racial in-between-ness that makes her emerge re-educated in as far as she learns to accept her trans-locatedness in connected spaces and fractured histories. Melville explores the depths of Creole identity, enriching it with an awareness of the role of gender in complicating and reifying that subjectivity. Moreover, she challenges *white* gazes and notions of nation and *race*, interweaving her protagonist's national and cultural in-between-ness with the phenomenon that has become known as *racial passing*.

---

<sup>1</sup> Edwards K. Brathwaite, *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica*. Oxford: Clarendon 1971: 310.

<sup>2</sup> Édouard Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse. Selected Essays*. Trans. J. Michael Dash. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia 1989: 142.

<sup>3</sup> Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*. Trans. Betsy Wing. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press 1997: 11.

<sup>4</sup> C.F.P. Postcolonial Translocations. 20th annual GNEL / ASNEL Conference University of Münster, Germany 21 - 24 May 2009.

<sup>5</sup> Zadie Smith, *White Teeth*. London: Penguin Books 2001 (2000): 271-272

<sup>6</sup> Pauline Melville, "Eat Labba and Drink Creek Water." in: Id. *Shape-shifter. Stories*. London: the Women's Press, 1990: 148-164.

## **Annemarie Baldinger (Wetzikon)**

### **The chameleon or changing attitudes to location**

In his latest novel, *Sea of Poppies* (2008), Amitav Ghosh uses the metaphor of the chameleon to describe a globalized existence with multiple identities, which transcends national, cultural, linguistic, and even gender borders. Iliya Troyanov, who writes both in German and English, uses the metaphor of the chameleon to describe his own existence, which is 'translocational' in every possible sense of the term, and is mirrored in his novel *The Collector of Worlds* (2008, translated from *Der Weltensammler*, 2006). The chameleon metaphor also appears in Malaysian author K.S. Maniam's crucial short story 'Haunting the Tiger' (1990), but there the animal's virtue is its ability to 'blend into the landscape'. Looking at the scene of Anglophone Malaysian literature as a whole – with a view to developments on a global level – this paper will argue that, while for an older generation of authors location as place of origin, displacement through migration, and the desire to belong was central, these issues have ceased to matter for a younger generation of writers, who can now quite unconsciously attend to problems confronting their own country as well as to global issues, and for whom transcultural contacts are an everyday routine, not least through various forms of online writing.

## **Bidisha Banerjee (U Hong Kong)**

### **Capturing impermanence, finding the self: The trope of photography and diasporic identity formation in Jhumpa Lahiri's story 'Hema and Kaushik'**

In the long story 'Hema and Kaushik' that comprises Part II of Jhumpa Lahiri's most recent collection *Unaccustomed Earth*, we find the recurrent trope of photographs and photography. Kaushik, the child of immigrants, leaves for Bombay at the age of nine with his parents and returns to Cambridge after seven years. Even as an adolescent, we see him photographing everything. Later when his mother dies of cancer, his father puts all her photos in a shoebox, seals it and hides it behind a closet. Out of sheer curiosity, his step sisters open the box and look at the pictures. Kaushik is appalled and leaves the house that same night with the photos. He can't throw them away, but buries them in a beautiful spot above the ocean. As an adult, Kaushik becomes a photojournalist who visits war torn areas, documenting the destruction with his camera. In my paper I wish to analyze this trope of photography in the story and posit a relation between the desire to photograph and the diasporic condition. As a war correspondent based in Rome and sent on assignment to South America, Africa, and the Middle East, Kaushik becomes the quintessential translocated citizen of the world, occupying a number of fractured spaces. He practically severs all relations with his ordinary home (India) as well as his diasporic home (the US). He does not return to either place for years and feels no need to do so. 'As a photographer his origins were irrelevant,' Kaushik thinks. He thus becomes a romantic who has no home outside of memory. I wish to argue that Lahiri's use of the trope of photography belies Kaushik's pride in his lack of rootedness. Photographs capture a fleeting moment and the transitoriness of the moment that is memorialized in a photograph,

creates a sense of the sacred. I argue that Kaushik's vocation as a photographer counters the unrootedness of his diasporic condition. Although he lives a life of temporariness, his bags always packed and his passport in his pocket, his photographs symbolically signify a search for origins and roots, a yearning for stability, further heightened by his identity as a hyphenated second generation immigrant.

**Fatim Boutros (U Erlangen)**

### **Afro-Caribbean diasporic literature: Self-articulation of a translocal nation**

Current debates on national literatures show a high degree of skepticism towards received canons and the very notion of national literature. In reaction to neo-conservativist agitation and new fundamentalisms, the nation itself has apparently become suspect. These factors may partly explain why in the case of diasporic communities the term *nation* is hardly used. It is evident that a diasporic cultural group like the Afro-Caribbean nation cannot receive its shared sense of community from a common habitus based on direct interaction. Any territorially defined concept of the nation ignores two of the fundamental characteristics of Afro-Caribbean identity. First, the community is quintessentially diasporic and can no longer be constricted to the Caribbean archipelago. Second, the ethnic boundary that separates Afro-Caribbean culture from the culture of former colonizers has to be regarded as a defining factor that continues to influence contemporary identities. Nevertheless, this essay contends that Afro-Caribbean national literature aims at the introduction of a counter-discursive voice and has therefore a distinct political ambition. The interpretation of Afro-Caribbean representation as a national literature challenges traditional understandings of nationality and may thus raise consciousness of the Eurocentric bias of traditional literary canons. If the interpretation of the nation as an *imagined community* is taken seriously, then the degree to which institutionalized taxonomies such as national literature are still governed by Eurocentric understandings of nationality becomes obvious. The impact of the usage of such categories on academic institutions and publishing realities are profound. School and university curricula are up to the present day drawn up in accordance to received canons, and the marketing strategies of editors clearly follow the structures introduced by educational institutions. The consequences of such labelling, therefore, need to be considered in the analyses of literary discourses. Such a readjustment of critical practices is an important space-clearing gesture in the struggle for a more complex understanding of national spaces.

**Maggie Ann Bowers (U Portsmouth)**

### **Translocal narrative strategies: The threads that string us along**

This paper finds its beginnings in the paradox that while postcolonialists read texts from culturally specific and disparate locations we do so with an understanding of the sense of their 'belonging' to a tradition of literature – that of the postcolonial. The relationship between the texts becomes apparent in the similarities of the narrative structures and techniques employed. Yet, these very techniques can equally be viewed as translocal aspects of postcolonial fiction. This paper will examine the use of

narrative devices in a variety of postcolonial texts to examine the local and culturally specific influences upon the articulation of the narrative and the manner in which these elements from the western novel tradition become transformed by their con/text.

With particular consideration of the influence of oral narrative, and the function of narrative and storytelling as testimony, this paper will consider the work of translocal authors Pauline Melville, Ngugi wa Thiongo, and Native Americans Sherman Alexie and Leslie Marmon Silko. Analysis will reveal the way in which narrative devices are at once culturally and locally specific while also creating the links between texts that give us a sense of the existence of a 'grammar' of postcolonial narrative form.

**Nadia Butt (U Münster)**

### **The location of transcultural memory in Indu Sundaresan's *The Splendor of Silence***

This paper sets out to negotiate the location of transcultural memory in a historical novel *The Splendor of Silence* (2006) by Indu Sundaresan, an American-based writer of Indian origin. Taking inspiration from Pierre Nora's notion of 'sites of memory,' and Michel de Certeau's 'spaces of memory,' I focus on 'location' as a zone of intertwined memories and histories in the novel. I introduce and employ the theory of transcultural memory, which is a variation of Maurice Halbwachs's concept of 'collective memory' and Jan and Aleida Assmann's theory of 'cultural memory,' to shed light on the various representation of memory in the novel, set in multiple cultural and historical landscapes. *The Splendor of Silence* is based on the love story of Sam Hawthorne, a twenty-five year old U.S. Army captain and Mila, daughter of an Indian political agent in Rudrakot, a princely state in British India. The novel opens twenty years later in Seattle with Olivia, Sam and Mila's daughter, receiving a 'trunk of memories' from India, filled with letters from her parents' past, letters which begin to break the 'silence' of her childhood. Written in an elaborate epistolary format, the novel weaves a fine tapestry of memory and history, giving us insight into the lives of characters caught between the interstices disparate cultures and countries. I contend that the novel, set in pre-partition India and war-torn Burma of 1942 and Seattle of 1963, is not a mere illustration of 'dislocation' or 'relocation' of Indian and American characters, but rather a portrayal of overlapping territories, histories and memories from the perspectives of India, Burma and America's past and present, hence the flashback narrative depicts 'national,' cultural, 'racial' and political reconfigurations, cutting across geographical and temporal boundaries. In the development of my argument, I also highlight how the 'location' of memory resonates with personal and societal transformations as people and cultures interact in interconnected spaces in the face of political and social change.

**David Callahan (U Aveiro)**

### **Creative mixtures and destructive interfaces in the work of Janette Turner Hospital**

The fiction of Janette Turner Hospital generally turns on the hermeneutic dilemmas associated with writing itself being located on a border between witness and manipulation. From a Canadian protagonist

in India in her first novel, *The Ivory Swing* (1982), to the encounter of a Hungarian-Jewish Australian with his hitherto unknown Lebanese Muslim family in *Orpheus Lost* (2007), Hospital takes continual representational risks with respect to the portrayal of supposedly incommensurate realities. Her strategies of narrative decomposition and fragmentation operate in the service of a politics of identity that insists upon the multiple possibilities made available by movement, migration, and the contact between these realities. At the same time, her work constantly revisits sites of violence: from the ruthless male supervision of a widow in Kerala, through the shadowy collusion between the American right wing and murderous Central American regimes, the tendency of inward-looking rural communities to police difference, not to mention the synergies between American Intelligence and violent underground groups. This unpromising catalogue of conflict is further inflected by repeated instances of violence in childhood, almost always in the putatively idyllic and homogeneous setting of 1950s-1960s Queensland, articulating hierarchies of gender and class that are seen to precede cultural identification. This paper would reflect upon the categories of violence and their depiction in Hospital's work in the light of its insistence upon the creative possibilities of identity mixture and multiplicity.

## **Mark Campbell (U Glasgow)**

### **Dis-locating Kolkata**

From its genesis, migration has been one of the major defining characteristics of Kolkata. From the British diaspora and its import of colonial capitalism, Kolkata grew into a major economic node in the world and was host to merchants and traders from across the globe. Its rise to dominance resulted in the migration of people to the city from throughout India. These entangled diasporas, their settlement patterns and socioeconomic functions, led to the spatial organization of modern Kolkata and its representation as a cosmopolitan global city.

Due to Kolkata's pivotal position in the structure of East India, the partition of India meant the migration of approximately 700, 000 refugees to the city from East Pakistan. The result for postcolonial Kolkata was the proliferation of slums throughout the city, which, along with poverty and political instability became a dominant theme in representations of the postcolonial city. Waves of migration continued throughout the postcolonial period, in response to natural calamity as well as geopolitical and socioeconomic shifts. The paper will map the re-inscriptions that these processes had upon the socio-spatial organisation of the city.

The postcolonial juncture also led to the Bengali diaspora from Kolkata to the former cities of empire, such as London, Glasgow and Manchester. The paper will explore how the process of biological and cultural transfer has resulted in a complex variety of new, hybrid and contested identities and spatial arrangements, as well as discussing how these issues have been explored and represented in postcolonial literature and film.

**Marta Cariello (U Naples)**

**Translation as a critical re-naming of narration: Ahdaf Soueif's *The Map of Love***

Texts written or produced 'across cultures' and drawing on distinct cultural repertoires can be said to stand 'in between', performing the interstice in which cultural translation takes shape. Indeed, as Homi Bhabha states, 'culture as a strategy of survival is both transnational and translational' (*Location of Culture*, 247) and translation becomes, then, the performative nature of cultural communication: The only possible communication in a time of continuous and growing world migrations.

Indeed, translation may be considered as a critical re-naming of narration, a linguistic and substantial substitution of narration as authoritative and origins-claiming. If narration tells, translation shows the infinite possibilities of re-telling, revealing the process itself of telling as performative and, therefore, never fixed, translocal by its very nature. Translation carries its own sense of non-definitive, changeable, fluid, stratified and multi-vocal.

My paper seeks to analyze the proposition of substituting the concept of narration with the critical statement of translation, with specific reference to Ahdaf Soueif's *The Map of Love* (1999), a multi-vocal and stratified text that plays with different cultures and languages, and in which the story/ies are not so much narrated as translated, translocated, scattered, yet deeply connected.

**Francesco Cattani (U Bologna)**

**The boat as a travelling culture: *Sea of Poppies* by Amitav Ghosh**

The aim of this paper is to try a reading of the last novel by Amitav Ghosh, *Sea of Poppies*, through the texts of Michel Foucault, Paul Gilroy, and James Clifford. The element linking all these texts is represented by the *Ibis*, the schooner that is at the centre of the narration. The boat, as a perfect example of Foucault's heterotopia – 'a floating piece of space', 'juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible' – conveys different stories, just like the characters that inhabit Ghosh' novel.

At the same time, as a microcosm, it represents a sort of anthropological 'field' – according to that re-definition sought by Clifford – allowing the author to stage, analyse and follow a 'travelling culture'. Different colonial translocations contemporarily articulate in a space that is at the same time narrow and open (to the future as well as to the past). The *Ibis*, a 'blackbirder' whose history goes back to the Atlantic slave trade, carries the most heterogeneous passengers (their heritage moves from China to Europe to America), leading them from the coast of India to a destination that is not likely to be definitive (both for the passengers and for the readers, the book being the first chapter of a trilogy): Cultures that have travelled to find themselves in that place and that travel towards other places.

This boat is, as Paul Gilroy underlines, a 'micro-system of linguistic and political hybridity' and 'a mobile element that stood for the shifting spaces in between the fixed places they connected', and offers to Amitav Ghosh the possibility to create the story of a community whose composite roots and branches

expand both historically and geographically; a global story that seems to reach into our contemporary hybrid world.

**Rong-bin Chen (FJU Taiwan)**

**Practicing literary cosmopolitanism: Wang Dahong and his translation of *The Picture of Dorian Gray***

For decades, it hasn't been decided whether Wang Dahong's Chinese translation of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, which has *Du Liankui* as its Sinicized title, was 'properly' or 'improperly' translated. Rather than trying to solve this undecided controversy, this paper tries to argue that, because Wang uprooted his translation from the *fin-de-siècle* context of the original text, the readers of *Du Liankui* might fail to understand Oscar Wilde's acute attacks on the Philistinism of the Victorian society. However, both Wang's cosmopolitan and metropolitan visions were revealed in his modification of the novel's spatial and temporal settings: Wilde's focus on the London-Paris relationship in the original text was transformed into Taipei's relationship with other cities such as New York and Paris. The truth is, as one of the earliest architects in Post-War Taiwan, Wang used his strategy of transwriting to manifest the ideals of his urban aestheticism and cosmopolitanism: *Du Liankui* not only brought a new life to *Dorian Gray*, but also exemplifies that a translation is indeed a means for translators to practice literary cosmopolitanism.

**Annie Cottier (U Bern)**

**A poetics of cosmopolitanism: History and identity in *The Assassin's Song***

In this paper I argue that in M.G. Vassanji's novel *The Assassin's Song* (2007), the analysis of poetic forms and their relevance in relation to cosmopolitanism, history and identity, brings forth what I define as a poetics of cosmopolitanism. The narrator Karsan, who moves from rural Gujarat to the US in order to study English literature at Harvard, attains an insight into literary texts, specifically into poetry and song, which goes beyond mere literary comparison and enables a distinct connection between Sufi *Ginans* (devotional songs) and the English metaphysical poets. I argue that this insight enables Karsan to develop a new understanding of the history of his Sufi background. Karsan is thus finally able to assume his responsibility as the leader of the Sufi community in his native village, albeit by developing his personal understanding of the task.

I will contend that the translocation of poetics and the unprecedented consciousness of similarity of culture, rather than of difference, entail a poetics of cosmopolitanism. As a concept that has been discussed in postcolonial studies (Bhabha, Breckenridge, Chakrabarty, Pollock) but has in recent years developed a dynamics of its own that goes beyond postcolonial dichotomies, cosmopolitanism enables a discussion of history, identity and belonging in a new and reconciliatory way.



**Kylie Crane (U Erlangen)**

### **Go forth and perish? Explorer myths and national natures**

In exploring, explorers not only fill the blank spaces of maps by with naming and drawing (or other forms of representation), they also fill in blank spaces of cultural history with myth. Several parallels emerge when comparing the Lewis and Clark expedition of the United States of America with the Franklin expedition in Canada, and the Burke and Wills expedition through mainland Australia – their contacts with indigenous cultures, for example, and their colonial missions. There are some key differences too. Most significantly: The USA expedition returned, whereas the Canadian and Australian ones ended in death. It is the consequences for the respective imaginations of nature – as a background landscape or as active agent, as passive potential or as looming threat – that I will focus on in this paper.

The three expeditions and their various cultural manifestations, which I will analyze, continue to have cultural currency, manifesting in many ways in many texts. Particular attention will be paid to the mythical or epical status accorded to the men, the expeditions, and their respective ends. Of central concern is the way in which these myths influence imaginations of country, understood as both nation and nature.

**Elisabeth Damböck (FU Berlin)**

### **Bombay: Translocal city**

While the actual capital of Maharashtra has officially been (re)given its Gujarati and Maharati name pronounced 'Mumbai' in 1995, the English version based on a previous Portuguese naming of the space, 'Bombay', not only continues to be used especially in the South Asian Diaspora, but has developed into a city of its own, an imaginary space located mostly in this diaspora, thus becoming a part of the cultural imaginary of North America and Great Britain most of all, and home to much literature by and about transmigrants. While – as evident from for example Suketu Mehta's *Maximum City: Bombay Lost and Found* (2004) – modern day Mumbai is the financial, film, but also one of the crime and corruption capitals of India, Bombay has developed into a site that can be (re)claimed by anyone, as it has transcended the 'Cult of Authenticity'.

This paper would like to investigate the role of Bombay as a translocal city in much fiction by writers of South Asian heritage living in the economic centers of the West – mostly in North America, Rohinton Mistry added Bombay Parsi communities to the Canadian literary landscape, and Thrity Umrigar in *Bombay Times* similarly portrays a self-contained neighborhood in this cityscape. Anosh Irani makes the city the space, and often protagonist, of his novels and plays, transforming it into a mystic, fantastic, but also cruel location his characters struggle with. Finally, in contrast, I would also like to look at Anita Desai's *Baumgartner's Bombay*, which exemplifies the power which location and the interpretation of location for the self has for a migrant subject, as contrary to what the title of the novel might promise, this novel is not about Bombay or even a version of Bombay. It is rather about a displaced German Jew,

whose version of the city he has lived in for many years is constructed from fragments of other places he knows, Berlin, Venice, Calcutta, a detention camp in the Himalayas and various stations on the way. Either rendering of the City displays not only the imaginary aspect of the cityscape for literature, but also how, in the narrative of the South Asian Diaspora, Bombay has become a variety of distinct spaces apart from its original geographical position of Mumbai, but, at the same time, without its being turned into a city pastoral that is looked upon only nostalgically or melancholically.

**Geoffrey V. Davis (RWTH Aachen)**

### **Postcolonial transformations: the Bhasha Adivasi project**

The Bhasha Research and Publication Centre, established by Ganesh Devy in Vadodara (India) has since its inception worked specifically with and on behalf of the Adivasi, or tribal people of India, who have long been neglected in India itself, and whose cultural expression remains little known both in India and abroad. Bhasha has undertaken to document the linguistic, literary and artistic heritage of tribal communities in India; it has collaborated with national academies of art and literature, and research institutes to encourage research in tribal art and literature. It has pioneered the publication of literary and educational materials in tribal languages, and it has set up the Adivasi Academi at Tejgadh (Gujarat) for the promotion of tribal languages, literature, arts and culture, and as an institute of formal education. In the process, its work has taken it much beyond the confines of linguistic and literary studies into areas such as health, agriculture and micro-finance. Having worked with them over the past three years, I should like in this talk both to consider the Adivasis in the wider context of indigenous studies, briefly reviewing such issues as orature; storytelling; art; language development; cultural and human rights; publishing in aboriginal/tribal languages; translation from aboriginal / tribal languages, and the marginalization of aboriginal / tribal cultural expression generally. I hope that it will be possible to view their innovative project in the context of political and social activism and to assess the importance of such work for postcolonial studies.

**Ellen Dengel-Janic (U Stuttgart)**

### **Bringing the slum to your doorstep: New modernity in *Slumdog Millionaire***

In my paper I will look behind the scenes of the recent Golden Globe winner and Oscar nominee *Slumdog Millionaire* (dir. Danny Boyle, 2008), which tells the story of a *chaiwala* (seller of tea) from Mumbai who wins 20 million rupees on the Indian version of 'Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?' What can be gleaned from the current furore around the film is that we are faced with another ostentatious example of the West's fascination for the underbelly of the Third World, a phenomenon that, in my view, is another version of 'poorism,' a term used by Amelia Gentlemen, who investigates poverty tourism in her article 'Slum tours: A day trip too far?' (*The Observer*, May 7, 2006). In contrast to poverty tourism, however, the film brings the experience of the slum to your own doorstep. This type of translocation will be at the centre of my interest when examining the film's problematic capitalizing on the spectacle of the

Third World city. One of the reasons for the growing interest in Mumbai, the epitome of the modern megalopolis, might be that, as Rana Dasgupta suggests, 'the third-world city is more than the source of the things that will define the future, but actually *is* the future of the western city' (*New Statesman*, March 27, 2006). If Mumbai (with its slums) is the future of Western urban life, and by implication, Western modernity in general, then it is crucial to grasp the significance of filmic, narrative and audio-visual representations of the 'maximum city' which disseminate and transport such a new modernity.

**Lars Eckstein (U Tübingen)**

**Filming illegals: Clandestine translocation and the representation of bare life**

This paper revolves around the chances and pitfalls of semi-fictional documentaries of clandestine immigration. I will set out by charting some of the ethical as well as conceptual problems involved in such representational endeavours, drawing on the political philosophy of Giorgio Agamben and the media philosophy of Slavoy Žižek in particular. I will then offer a comparative reading of two films which have self-reflexively tackled the challenge of representing what Agamben calls 'bare life'. These are Sorious Samura's 2006 TV feature *Living with Illegals* and Michael Winterbottom's 2002 film *In This World*. Both strategically operate with an intricate blending of documentary and fictional modes, yet only one film, I feel, ultimately succeeds.

**Beate Eisner (U Potsdam)**

**Saris & suitcases: Transnational imaginaries in contemporary South Asian American narratives**

Increasingly, since the 2000s, literary and cinematic representations of South Asian elders in the U.S. have included experiences that could be described as 'transnational aging' (Lamb 2002), featuring aging characters who have lived in the U.S. for several decades and others who have come over the past several years to be close to their U.S. settled children. These narratives have explored how elderly South Asian characters are striving to reconcile conflicting cultural traditions in their 'host' communities while maintaining strong emotional ties to their 'home' communities. Moreover, filmmakers and authors have invented protagonists who operate in transnational frameworks. Thus, they have represented in accessible form for U.S. and international audiences, what several researchers have described as a kind of 'diaspora consciousness' (Vertovec 1999, 3) or 'contemporary immigrants [that] are seen as maintaining familial, economic, political, and cultural ties across international borders in effect making the home and host societies a single arena of social action' (Foner 1997, 355).

This paper explores how contemporary South Asian American filmmakers and authors have imagined the experiences of transnational / diasporic elders in the U.S. through a variety of often stereotypical representations. While Asian Indians in these narratives reconcile conflicting ideologies about aging in the 'West' and in India, they also affect and produce varying concepts of aging in transnational cultural worlds.

#### Bibliography:

- Foner, Nancy. "What's New about Transnationalism? New York Immigrants Today and at the Turn of the Century". *Diaspora* 6 (1997): 355-75.
- Lamb, Sarah. "Intimacy in a Transnational Era: The Remaking of Aging among Indian Americans." *Diaspora*. 11: 3 (2002): 299-330.
- Vertovec, Steven. "Conceiving and Researching Transnationalism." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. 22: 2 (1999): 447-62 (1-14).  
<<http://www.transcomm.ox.ac.uk/working%20papers/conceiving.PDF>> 14.01.2009

### **Jens Frederic Elze (FU Berlin)**

#### **Translocation and deixis in postcolonial literatures**

This paper is an analysis of how border-crossings and translocations in literature are reflected and performed on the level of narrative typology and deixis. Fictional autobiographies in which the process of writing from outside of the home country, nation, and territory is quite explicitly dramatised lend themselves most appropriately to such an analysis. I look at three such texts, V.S. Naipaul's *The Mimic Men*, Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, and M.G. Vassanji's *The In-Between Worlds of Vikram Lall* to observe how border-crossings and translocations – in their questioning of identity, teleology and consistency – provoke the set opposition between *Ilhere/now* and *Ilthere/then* to crumble. On the level of personal deixis, translocations produce and are reflected by 'an alternation in pronouns referring to the same character, especially when that shifting is motivated by identificational problems of the character' (Fludernik 1996: 243), whereby the consistent self-designation of the narrator via the proximal personal pronoun *I* is destabilised. With regard to temporal deixis, border-crossings and translocations destabilise and liquefy the distinction between *discourse* which is in the present tense and *histoire* which is usually in the past (Beneveniste 1973: 206). The narrator no longer remains, as Thomas Mann has once termed, 'der raunende Beschwörer des Imperfekts' (*Der Zauberberg* 9) but past and present blur, and experience becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish from comment. Such destabilisations of personal and temporal deictic reference not only reflect but also perform the dis-orientation of translocations in literature, and thereby enact the texts as instances of what they thematize.

### **Astrid Feldbrügge (U Bayreuth)**

#### **Nostalgic distaste: The representation of culinary conservatism in Ivan Vladislavić's *The Restless Supermarket***

The paper examines one aspect of the shifting cultural boundaries within South African society during the transformation from apartheid to post apartheid as reflected in the increasing diversification of South African food. The end of apartheid has seen a breakdown of racial and national borders and the promotion of a multiethnic, inclusive Rainbow Nation. By opening its borders to immigrants from all over the world, South Africa has also welcomed foreign cuisine. In his novel *The Restless Supermarket* (2001), Ivan Vladislavić gives a unique satirical account of the transition in his representation of protagonist Aubrey Tearle's daily encounters with translocal food and the ironisation of Tearle's persistent resistance to change. Tearle views the developments of the new social order, which he particularly encounters in the changing culinary landscape, with suspicion. A retired proofreader, Tearle spends his

time 'proofreading' the new footstalls and restaurants, which he regards as a degeneration of the old white South African standards and principles. His difficulty accepting the culinary changes mirrors his distaste for the new socio-political order as well as his nostalgic attempt to restore the old order. He is therefore represented as continuing the colonial discourse of 'Othering' and failing to participate in the translocations of formerly fixed terrains within his neighbourhood and society.

### **Carina Fernandez Bohn (U Lugo)**

#### **Spanish migration to Australia: The Spanish immigrants' contribution to multicultural Australia**

I wish to reflect upon Spanish migration to Australia from the late 1800s to the present, comparing historical data with representations made of the Spanish immigrant community in Australia through literature, theatre, stand-up comedy, media, real life experiences, etc.

Within the historical part of my proposal, factors which led to immigration will be discussed, and possible causes for Spain's low numbers in immigration compared to other Southern European countries, such as Greece and Italy. In particular, with the abolition of the White Australia Policy, movements made by the Australian and Spanish governments to promote or hinder migration and the changes in Spain which led to many returning to their homeland.

Women migrants will also be analysed, as their role in the Australia was secondary, and their only task for many years throughout Australian immigration history was that of marrying their counterparts and keeping them in Australia. They were to marry these immigrants, have their children, and thus help towards populating Australia rather than having an economic contribution to the country.

Novels written by Gloria Montero, stand-up comedian Simón Palomares, newspapers and TV programmes and real life experiences are just a few of the examples that I will be using to illustrate the position of Spanish immigrants within the multicultural society of Australia.

### **Sonja Fielitz (U Marburg)**

#### **Trans-locating libraries: Ingenious pre- and post-colonial travel narratives**

This paper sets out to trace the exploration of foreign places and foreign people not so much from dangerous unknown territories, but from the security of libraries, and is thus related to variously fictional and ingenious accounts of others.

Medieval and Early Modern travel narratives and explorers' accounts have been exposed as less a matter of factual accuracy than creative genius: John Mandeville never left Britain in order to write eloquently about exotic countries and their fabulous inhabitants; Columbus knew how to play one government against another in order to lay claim to the discovery of India. Closer to our own day, J. A. Lawson and Frederick Albert Cook have been exposed as ingenious liars concerning their various accounts of the discovery of unknown territories.

Given this 'tradition' of ingenious travel writing, I would like to suggest that it might be useful, if not indeed necessary, to take into consideration the history of travel writing and the imaginative construction

of trans-locational spaces in order to adequately assess contemporary, postcolonial accounts of translocation and otherness. Texts to be discussed will include (rather briefly) Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, (as a – however daring – 'must' in Münster), Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* and, in more detail, J.A. Lawson's *New Guinea* (1875), an account of Lawson's fictional expedition to an almost unknown region. As I will line out, Lawson's mode of traveling is as extraordinary as his geography and accounts of the natural history of the island.

### **Paloma Fresno-Calleja (U Palma)**

#### **(Trans)Locating Pacific identities: From the small island to the largest Polynesian city in the world**

In line with the theme of the conference, my paper considers the multiple trans/locations that determine contemporary Pacific identities in New Zealand. Postcolonial Pacific identities can no longer be confined to the cultural limits of the islands but are being shaped by the experience of diaspora and multiple forms of transcultural exchange. In New Zealand, the younger members of the Pacific community have negotiated their identity across diverse locations, combining varying degrees of allegiance to their island homelands with the articulation of a Pan pacific identity whose ingredients are mainly determined by the urban locations in which they live. I will consider the nuances of these trans/locations through the analysis of several literary texts produced by a young generation of New Zealand-born artists of Pacific descent. I will pay special attention to the most common spatial metaphors employed by these artists to convey their sense of be/longing and trans/location.

### **Shamani Patricia Gabriel (U Malaya, Kuala Lumpur)**

#### **Diasporic translocations: Difference, multiculturalism, and national identity in Malaysia**

As our various worlds are brought together by the diasporic translocations of people and their play of ideas, values, and practices, it would appear that assertions of difference are on the wane. However, the reality is that at no other time in human history has the idea of difference been perceived as a greater threat to social cohesion and national identity than it is today.

My paper will set out to investigate ideas of difference and national belonging from the perspective of diasporic communities. It is not often that diasporas are discussed in tandem with nationalism or national identity. In fact, the common understanding is that diasporas as translocated phenomena are either transnational or anti-national phenomena. Contrary to popular perception, however, my paper will focus on recent debates on diasporas that emphasize the 'national' tendencies and aspirations of such communities. It will argue that tensions that exist in contemporary societies largely stem from the fact that the national consciousness and narrative of these diasporic communities clash and collide with state-sponsored discourses on identity. This is primarily because the form of nationalism and modes of national identity formation that prevail in many locales, both in the developed and developing world, still draw their terms of reference from outdated paradigms. While nationalisms have taken many forms and have drawn from a diverse body of resources, the selective focus of this paper is on those forms of nationalism

and constructions of national identity and political membership that have become hegemonic in contemporary society. The motivating premise of this paper is that the discourse of the state is not in line with the aspirations and changing identifications of the people, specifically its diasporic communities.

Focusing on the case of the postcolonial state of Malaysia, the paper will argue that modes of constructing political community founded on the imagined cohesion of the identities of the people will only falter under the heterogeneous realities of the 'translocated' moment. It will examine literary productions by diasporic communities in Malaysia in the attempt to seek to identify ways in which our understanding of diaspora and its translocations has evolved while it also offers a critical evaluation of these processes.

**Rachael Gilmour (Goldsmiths College, U London)**

### **Translation and translocation: Writing contemporary London**

This paper asks how London, always a multilingual space, has been transformed through translation in contemporary London writing in a period in which the complex negotiation between languages and cultures has become a defining feature of the translocal city, even as its status as supposed hub of the monoglot Anglophone world persists. Rushdie's 'translated man' has become, of course, a central motif for the consideration of migrant metropolitan identities; but his is only one vision of the translocal metropolis and its inhabitants, forged through translation in all its senses. The works of translingual writers in particular, writing outside but often in dialogue with their home language, can be seen both as products and articulations of these processes. Such writers' work may be characterized by what Samia Mehrez calls 'radical bilingualism'<sup>7</sup>, deploying two or more languages within the 'English' text.

This paper will address how the interactions between languages – with language functioning, in effect, as itself a translocation – can be used to explore and articulate visions of the city as fractured and disconnected, as well as the site of new identities forged through translation. Focusing on Leila Aboulela's *Minaret* (2005), and Xiaolu Guo's *A Concise Chinese-English Dictionary for Lovers* (2007), the paper will address the ways in which translation is used to articulate the fracturing experiences of migrancy, and to place limits on the possibilities of intercultural encounter and mobility, as well as to conjure new visions of the city, and to make space for new (in this case, gendered) identities.

**Francesca Giommi (U Padua)**

### **Fighting for the mother country, fighting to belong: WW2 African and Caribbean soldiers in the British army**

What urges a Nigerian young boy to cheat on his age in order to fight among the Chindits in North Burma during the Second World War for a country he has never seen and he has barely heard of? Does

---

<sup>7</sup> Samia Mehrez, 'Translation and the Postcolonial Experience: The Francophone North African Text', in Lawrence Venuti (ed.), *Rethinking Translation. Discourse, Subjectivity, Ideology* (London: Routledge, 1993).

fighting for the 'mother country' make you belong and become its welcomed and beloved son once the war is over?

The answer is apparently 'no' in *Small Island* (2004), Andrea Levy's acclaimed novel telling of the migration and disillusion of a Jamaican ex-RAF serviceman after WW2, eager to find shelter among the arms of a caring 'Mother Country' for whom he has risked his life, but who faces him with a wall of hostility, racism and discrimination. The same rude awakening awaits a group of Jamaican WW2 air force volunteers in Scotland in the play *A Jamaican Airman Foresees His Death* (1991), confronted with that sort of prejudice and ignorance that lead to one of them being stripped naked to see whether he has a tail. Yeats's famous poem "An Irish Airman Foresees His Death" is appropriated by British-Guyanese novelist, poet and playwright, Fred D'Aguiar, and twisted into a rhapsodic reflection on alienation and dislocation from a post-colonial perspective. This same dislocation is internalized and becomes extreme alienation in *Burma Boy* (2008), Biyi Bandele's latest novel written to commemorate his father's contribution to what the author's describes as 'the conflict's least documented and most brutal theatre'.

The paper will suggest how the war itself triggered a process of translocation among fractured and variously connected spaces, from Europe to the Americas, to the farthest East, forcing its participants to more or less voluntary changes of location, departures and arrivals, fractures and new problematic resettlements. The experience of the Second World War, commonly perceived and described as a Western war, is appropriated and retold by black British writers some fifty years after its end from a marginal, diasporic and refreshing point of view. The three works analysed in this paper celebrate the heroic but still unknown participation of soldiers from the former colonies of the empire, recently recognized and testified at an institutional level by the exhibition 'From War to Windrush: Stories of West Indian Men and Women in Wartime', currently on display at the Imperial War Museum in London (June 2008-March 2009). Along with the historical restitution –and more importantly – these narratives offer a dislocation of subjectivity and agency, and a psychological insight of previously silenced voices.

**Ellen Grünkemeier (U Hanover)**

### **Translocation: Representing HIV/AIDS as an epidemic or as a pandemic?**

In medical studies, scientists differentiate between two main forms of contagious diseases affecting a large number of people: epidemic and pandemic. An infectious disease which occurs in a specific locale is called an *epidemic*. The local characteristics of the infection are focused on, for example, possible transmission routes of the infection as well as its impact on the local culture, society, economy, politics, etc. The term *pandemic*, on the other hand, defines an infection not limited in place. In the examination of a pandemic, scientists try to find general concepts which can explain major similarities and differences between the regions affected by the infection.

These medical categories can be made productive in literary and cultural studies, as my analysis of South African representations of HIV/AIDS will show. With more than 5 million individuals living with



HIV, South Africa is one of the countries most affected by the virus. Several texts – such as Phaswane Mpe's novel *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* (2001) – represent the South African AIDS epidemic. Yet, some texts also go beyond the local in that they address the virus in the larger contexts of (Sub-Saharan) Africa and the world, thus presenting HIV/AIDS as a translocal syndrome, as a pandemic.

### **Serena Guarracino (U Naples)**

#### **Transcreation in the (m)other language: Suniti Namjoshi's *Poems of Govindagraj***

Back in 1968, Indo-English writer Suniti Namjoshi translates a collection of poems by Marathi poet Ram Ganesh Gadkari, a.k.a. Govindagraj. The book comes out in the series 'Transcreations', by the Calcutta Writers Workshop, which offered poetry in various Indian languages translated into English. The aim of this cultural project, in a subcontinent where hundreds of different languages are currently spoken, was to create a shared literary canon in the only language that, thanks to British colonization, was common to all – English. Namjoshi herself did not know Marathi, as she wrote in *Because of India*; as she belonged to a powerful family from the warrior caste, her first language had been Hindi, followed by English as the language of education and, subsequently, of literary writing. It is thus with the help of her mother Sarojini Namjoshi, who co-authors the transcreation, that Namjoshi sets out to translate Gadkari's poems as a way to improve her knowledge of Marathi, that had at the time become of utmost importance to her in her new position as officer of the Indian Administrative Service.

This paper analyzes how Namjoshi's transcreations of Gadkari's poems dislocates the notions of 'translation' and 'mother-tongue' in relation to the translocation imposed by colonial and postcolonial experience. Unacquainted with the language of her mother, Namjoshi's translation aims at creating a matrilinear lineage for the colonized culture, although acknowledging that it is impossible to do without the language of the colonizer. This transcreation does not make up for the loss of the mother-tongue (up to this day, Namjoshi states she cannot speak or write Marathi well); on the other hand, this work takes up the challenge of translating in English, but for an Indian audience: what Sujit Mukherjee, in her *Translation as Discovery*, has defined the 'burden' of Indian translation into English. In this way, Namjoshi allows for what Walter Benjamin has named the 'earthquake' that any translation must accomplish in the target language, so that Namjoshi's own poetry in English becomes permeated by that (m)other language, never regained, but also never completely lost.

### **Anne Haeming (U Konstanz)**

#### **Do not delete: How Nigerian spams end up between the folders**

Mothers writing in the name of their imprisoned sons, asking for money to keep the family business running: We all know the so called 'Nigerian Spams', they have cluttered up our spam folders for years.

The rhetoric of contagiousness is inherent to the internet, and especially to email communication. Whoever is writing the very spam emails: The 'Nigerian', as sender, is deliberately cast as infectious, as carrying viruses, breeding global epidemics.

The terminology reminds us of the so called 'medicolonial discourse': The rhetoric of imperial hygiene was a vital part of colonial thought; the *cordon sanitaire* or 'sanitary cordon' was conceived of as an infrastructural necessity for the Empire. Those suspicious of infecting the healthy 'imperial body' had to be kept apart, 'abjected', to use Julia Kristeva's term.

Spam mail is the 'new' abject; the corresponding performative act would be pressing the delete button. But artists such as writer Jonathan Land or actor/director Dean Cameron didn't delete the incoming spams – they replied. In doing so, they literally fished the Nigerian Spam Scams out of the trash and transformed them into dialogic stories. To refer to the conference title: The carriers of potential disease are translocated to an aesthetic environment: as spam art. This paper is going to analyze how these curious acts of appropriation-art work as postcolonial cleansing rituals. And how 'the Nigerian' spammers are dragged and dropped between wanted and unwanted spaces.

### **Franziska Harprecht (U Bayreuth)**

#### **No man's land: White dislocation in post-apartheid South Africa**

What happens when a discourse that has shaped lives and attitudes for more than forty years is suddenly abandoned? What happens when the parameters of one's life become unacceptable and inappropriate?

When apartheid was finally dismantled in 1990, the discourse, which had determined the lives of all, disappeared, leaving many people, especially whites, in a state of uprootedness and displacement. Carel van der Merwe's novel *No Man's Land* (2007) traces the story of Paul du Toit, a member of Military Intelligence during apartheid appearing before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 1996. In this situation, he has to find that his former actions are shifted to a new set of paradigms and parameters. Paul's psychological dislocation is followed by his physical movement to London, where he realises that he can neither escape the haunting memories of his past nor the shifting spaces of his present.

The paper aims at exploring, with the help of van der Merwe's novel, how the change of discourse in post-apartheid South Africa in general, and the work of the TRC in particular, caused significant feelings of dislocation and instability among members of the white community. The paper will work along the lines of emerging feelings of individual and collective guilt which in turn led to a failure of the construction of a new and truly inclusive discourse in order to complete the process of transformation.

### **Sharmila Nisha Harry (UWI St. Augustine)**

#### **Being and becoming? Re-negotiating self in Beryl Gilroy's *Boy Sandwich* and Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy***

This paper examines the issue of identity beyond archaic enclaves of 'essentialist' origins in Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy* (1990) and Beryl Gilroy's *Boy Sandwich* (1989). It problematizes the notion of identity as absolute with fixed roots and offers, instead, identity as a continuing re-negotiating of self between different cultural locations. Whether voluntary or by coercion, contact, rupture, displacements and

movement constitute the Caribbean condition. Travel is an embedded aspect of Caribbean culture. As such, journeying to the metropole is a constant theme in Caribbean migratory discourse. Writers illuminate this experience of mass migration to England in the fifties and then to North America and Europe in the sixties and the seventies – reversing Columbus' journey from the New World into the Old World. *Lucy* and *Boy Sandwich* foreground this experience of journeying from the Caribbean to the metropole. Although Gilroy's text is set in London and focuses on a third generation British-born black teenager, while Kincaid's text is situated in America and deals with a teenage girl from the Caribbean who journeys to America to work as an au pair, both writers provide a spectrum of possibilities for articulating the novels beyond delimiting categories of fixed positions and singular origins. The protagonists undergo continuous processes of negotiation between the old traditional culture and the new culture, in that 'in between' space. They must negotiate complicated locations of variable subject positions. Both texts are therefore important works in their re-thinking of identity. Furthermore, they support Hall's supposition of cultural identity as not just rooted in a common history but also en route to becoming something different – identity as a matter of 'becoming.'

**Dr. Sissy Helff (U Frankfurt/M)**

**'Naked men' in translocations: Representations of refugees in Arthur Koestler's *Arrival and Departure* and Caryl Phillips's *A Distant Shore***

This paper seeks to address cosmopolitanism in literature with a special focus on the trope of the 'naked man' as introduced by Giorgio Agamben. By drawing upon Agamben's concept of the 'naked man' and Derrida's unconditional hospitality, I will examine the narrative strategies through which refugee selfhood, illegality and the limits of the cosmopolitan condition are negotiated in Arthur Koestler's *Arrival and Departure* (1943) and Caryl Phillips's *A Distant Shore* (2003). Both novels, I argue, are seminal works of fiction presenting a decisive set of refugee stock characters and a great variety of different refugee trajectories. These trajectories map out not only the translocations of refugees (the spaces of a never really enacted genuine arrival) but also different time periods and social climates. While Koestler's novel depicts the fate of European refugees fleeing fascism during the 1930s, Phillips's narrative describes the lot African refugees face in Britain at the beginning of the new millennium. As these two authors introduce different refugee characters and storylines, the novels present strong notions of cosmopolitanisms through diverse narrative modes. A main concern of my paper, therefore, is to differentiate between the illustrations of 'old' and 'new' cosmopolitan conditions in various translocations.

**Jessica Hemmings (U Edinburgh)**

**Constructions of dress in African visual art and fiction**

Tim Barringer and Tom Flynn write in their Introduction to *Colonialism and the Object*, 'While representations of all kinds have been subjected to critical scrutiny within the general project of post-colonial enquiry, the broader category of functional, or non-representational three-dimensional objects

(whether considered as 'the applied arts', 'the decorative arts', or less restrictively as 'material culture') has largely been ignored in the context of debates about colonialism.<sup>8</sup> The authors go on to note, a 'certain irony' in this oversight 'since the circulation of goods and the increase of trade was a primary underlying motivation for imperial expansion.'<sup>9</sup> This oversight proves particularly acute when considering postcolonial fashion, a world as equally obsessed with identity as it is consumed with a desire to overturn expectation.

This paper will explore depictions of dress in contemporary fiction and visual art from the African continent. Contrary to the expected role of dress to reveal unspoken truths, this paper will propose that in many contemporary postcolonial examples the opposite is in fact true. In the experimental fiction of Yvonne Vera, the installations of Yinka Shonibare and Romuald Hazoumé, and the staged photography of Samuel Fosso, dress is written, sculpted and photographed to represent the inauthentic, rather than the authentic. The role that postcolonial fashion adopts in these contexts reveals much about the power of dress not only to engage in social critique, but also to take part in self-critique. As a result, postcolonial fashion and dress are found to have a significant, if complex, voice that undermines the expected function of dress to communicate 'authentic' identities.

### **Jonathan Highfield (U Rhode Island)**

#### **Translocation and foodways in the narrative of Sundiata**

In one of the most memorable moments in D.T. Niane's telling of the Sundiata story, while in exile in Mema, Sogolon Kedjou hears that there are merchants in town selling baobab leaves and gnougou: 'Sogolon took the baobab leaves and gnougou in her hand and put her nose to them as though to inhale the scent.'<sup>10</sup> The baobab has special significance for Sogolon, for it was a baobab tree her son Sundiata uprooted and planted by her hut in Niani, an act that confirmed his destiny as the founder of the empire of Mali. When smelling the leaves, she catches the scent of the foods she left behind in order to ensure the fulfilment of her son's destiny.

In *Keita, L'héritage du griot*, Dani Kouyaté also places a baobab tree at the center of the film. It is in the branches of this tree where Mabo tells his classmates the Sundiata story, which he himself is learning from the griot Djeliba. The scene in which Sundiata uproots the tree is juxtaposed against one where Djeliba attempts to eat spaghetti, a dish he has never before encountered.

In both Niane's and Kouyaté's versions of the Malian epic, foodways serve as markers of difference, both identifying a character as an outsider and simultaneously affirming their affiliation with a food culture elsewhere. In both Sogolon and Djeliba's case, food confirms their distance from home, but in both cases, the success of their narratives relies on trans-location. This paper will explore the way food

---

<sup>8</sup> Tim Barringer & Tom Flynn, *Colonialism and the Object*. London: Routledge, 1998. 3.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. 3.

<sup>10</sup> D.T. Niane, *Sundiata, an Epic of Old Mali*. Burnt Mill, Harlow: Longman. 1965.

and foodways serve as markers of national and personal identity, looking at examples of this connection between food and identity in several versions of the Sundiata narrative.

### **Rainer Hillrichs (U Bonn)**

#### **Daily photo blogs: Translocal space and postcoloniality**

Emily Ignacio argues that Internet cultural practices complicate our understandings of location, nation, and gender (184). This paper will illustrate a complication of the term location with reference to a limited field of cultural production. It will introduce the spatiality of daily photo blogs as a translocation, a location 'existing of fractured and variously connected spaces' that constitutes itself beyond conventional notions of a location (CFP). Daily photo blogs are run by individuals and form a genre of weblogs. Posts consist of photographs taken by the blogger of the town or city he or she is currently living in. The act of taking a picture ascribes meaning to a location and becomes a political strategy in places that bear colonial or neo-colonial inscriptions. It can also be a mode of coming to terms with a new location, as the large number of daily photo blogs run by migrants testifies. Nevertheless, representation is never *only* local since it occurs in a dynamic exchange with other photo blogs, for example, via monthly held theme days at the community site *City Daily Photo*. A binary of local vs. global or local vs. other local perspectives does not hold, since photographs are produced, published, viewed, and commented on from various local, national, and transnational positions that are again inflicted by gendered, religious, and other subjectivities. The global network *City Daily Photo* is also incongruent with other networks of daily photo blogs, such as the lists of links to photo blogs and other websites that are a page element of each daily photo blog. This horizontal and vertical layering further complicates the translocal spatiality of the genre. Moreover, since weblogs are cultural products that grow with each post and comment published, the location of an individual blog, and of its networks, is in a ceaseless state of becoming. The paper will close by outlining current discursive and material limits to this innovative cultural practice.

#### Bibliography:

Ignacio, Emily. "E-Scaping Boundaries: Bridging Cyberspace and Diaspora Studies Through Nethnography." *Critical Cyberculture Studies*. Eds. David Silver and Adrienne Massanari. New York and London: NY UP, 2006. 181-193.

### **Daniela Hrzán (HU Berlin)**

#### **Postcolonial translocations and the anatomy of victim stories: Physical and psychological translocations in the novel *Waiting* by Goretti Kyomuhendo**

Narratives by 'Third World' victims of gendered violence are cultural products, which are popular among readers in both Europe and the United States. While these narratives serve as entertainment, they also fulfil the women's need to make their stories public in order to address human rights violations and encourage other women to struggle for their rights. The position of a victim, however, is anything other than a comfortable or unambiguous location. As Susan Hirsch has pointed out, the position of a victim seeking justice can easily turn into a burden and become a silencing experience, for example, when the

desire for justice as expressed in the decision to testify might be in conflict with ideas and long-held convictions about what constitutes a fair trial and an appropriate form of punishment. Moreover, the process of representation which is needed to claim experiences of injustice and violence must be seen as being largely beyond the victim's control, as it is influenced by the gendered and racialized position of the afflicted person, as well as her social class status, nationality, and overall access to resources. Moreover, these acts of self-representation are further complicated by issues of (co-)authorship and authenticity which create doubts as to whether the narrative is really owned by the victim herself.

What then does it take to be a victim? Why are certain victims' autobiographical narratives highly successful while others fail to attract attention?

To approach these questions, my paper will look at autobiographies of African women migrants who present themselves as both victims and survivors of female genital cutting. Two points are of special interest: First, it will be argued that it is precisely the translocal speaking position of the women, which allows for a multifaceted marketing of and reception of their stories, as well as its use for advocacy on a variety of agendas ranging from human rights issues, to racism and the hostile treatment of foreigners in the respective host societies. In addition to extracting commonalities shared by these victim stories, my paper is also interested in examining what kind of autobiographical tradition is used to convey the victim's story and – using examples from Germany and the United States – how this 'choice' is tied to specific national and transnational histories of slavery and postcolonialism. Second, the paper will also address the question of whether it is possible for women to employ the position of a victim strategically as a form of agency and empowerment, and if so, how this might look.

**Chung-in Im (SKKU, Seoul)**

### **Problematics of translocal feminism for Korean women**

This paper attempts to bring into questions the ahistorical approaches of translocal feminism toward the post-colonial/inter-national issues, and their (un)conscious erasure, distortion, and/or appropriations of local pasts, followed by the consequent re-colonization of the formerly colonized nations' culture and academia. In doing so, this paper analyzes, as an example, American playwright Lavonne Mueller's *Hotel Splendid* and its recent staging in Seoul, Korea.

Mueller's play deals with the Korean memories of the Japanese colonization of the East Asian territories in the early twentieth century, with particular emphasis on those of 'comfort women,' who were exploited as sex slaves during the Second World War under the systematic control of the Japanese Imperial Army. Staging brutal rapes of four teenage comfort women, Mueller claims that it is a search for a solid sisterly bond among women to dig into the lost/repressed memories of the colonized Korea: 'This play is a testament to part of Korea's painful history' and 'I[Mueller] felt it was necessary to do so [to write about the Korean history] in homage to all women who have been the spoils of war.'

Unavoidable questions are still left, however. Can/should/how many Korean women agree with the translocal rebuilding of their colonial experiences as women at the expense of their local identity and cultural difference? Mueller's *Hotel Splendid* was performed by Theatre Choin in May 2008, entered into competition for the 29<sup>th</sup> Seoul Theatre Festival award, and warmly received by the Korean media and higher academic institutions, in part due to the aggressive promotion of the Choin company. And yet, one cannot but wonder if the once enslaved Korean women aren't still being colonized and exploited in the play, as well as in its staging; with the ravished bodies of local women displayed for a translocal audience's pleasure. This paper is an attempt to answer those uncomfortable questions.

### **Johan Jacobs (U KwaZulu-Natal)**

#### **Picturing the African diaspora in Patricia Schonstein Pinnock's novel *Skyline*.**

Patricia Schonstein Pinnock's novel *Skyline* (2000) provides one of the most wide-ranging, metadiscursive examples of ekphrasis in contemporary South African fiction. The novel takes its title from the name of a run-down apartment block in Cape Town that has become occupied largely by illegal immigrants and refugees from the rest of Africa. Some are economic migrants, others are survivors of various wars in every part of the continent, all of them have stories, which cannot be put into words. Individually or together they survive by selling sweets, South African flags, African curios, or drugs, on the sidewalks, at the Pan-African market, or from Skyline itself. As a group, they are the objects of the xenophobic distrust and violence of black and white South Africans alike. This paper will show how Pinnock has devised a structure whereby the stories of the residents of Skyline can be expressed. The novel consists of forty symmetrical chapters, in each of which the main stories are narrated, and each of which concludes with the description of a fictive painting. In most of the descriptions of the fictive paintings, an actual, well-known work from the history of Western art is explicitly cited as the inspiration. In a detailed analysis of the notional ekphrasis of the fictive paintings in counterpoint with the actual ekphrasis of the Western paintings, the paper will argue that the self-reflexive conclusion of the novel suggests that a postcolonial art form provides the only imaginative home for the diasporic African subject, just as a number of nineteenth and twentieth-century painters who were themselves exiles and émigrés have all found their collective, diasporic identity and artistic home in the historical category of 'Western Art'.

### **Till Kinzel (TU Brunswick)**

#### **Segun Afolabi, transnational identity, and the politics of belonging**

This paper explores the implications of mass migration and the conditions of hybridization for early 21<sup>st</sup> century Western societies in texts dealing with migrant experiences. Short stories from *A Life Elsewhere* (2006) and a novel *Goodbye Lucille* (2007) by the Afro-cosmopolitan writer Segun Afolabi will be explored with respect to the crucial problem of an ethics and politics of belonging, related to the recent controversies surrounding multiculturalism and issues of migration. These texts dealing with the

'in-between world' of migrants negotiate questions of identity, alienation and belonging in a so-called transcultural/transnational context. The issues raised in Segun Afolabi's fictions will be addressed by employing the ways of thinking developed in political philosophy, including recent phenomenological attempts to theorize the notion of 'home' and 'belonging' (e.g., by Karen Joisten), in order to deal with the complexities of the issue. The question, 'What constitutes the good life for the individual *and* the political community?' needs to be considered by taking into account the current plurality of approaches to forging identities in the political sphere as well. The subtlety of literary accounts of this phenomenon – literature may indeed be the best diagnostic instrument for studying a given society – sheds light, I suggest, on the conditions of politically relevant identity formations. A close reading of literary texts such as those by Afolabi offers an important contribution to a realistic and, therefore, complex and complicating account of our overall situation in the Western world with respect to the politics of belonging.

**Philipp Kneis (U Potsdam)**

**The exiled native: Questions of cultural removal and translocal American-Indian identity in novels by Sherman Alexie and James Welch**

Sherman Alexie (Spokane/Coeur d'Alene Indian) writes about the daily struggle for survival of Native Americans in the Pacific Northwest, mostly concerning Spokane Indians. The conflict between Reservation Indians and those having left the 'Rez' creates cases of identity in exile: The protagonists are caught between places they are supposed to inhabit as 'real Indians,' and those they have chosen for themselves. This translocalization thoroughly questions Indian identity in itself, and raises issues like authenticity, cultural preservation, and belonging. Novels under scrutiny will be *Flight* (2007) and *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (2007). James Welch's (Blackfoot/Gros Ventre) final novel *The Heartsong of Charging Elk* (2000) tells the story of a Lakota man stranded in Marseilles at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Charging Elk's Indianness, once removed from the United States, has to find new roots and new meaning in a Europe that is entirely alien to the world of a Plains Indian. While the topic of struggling identity is recurring in Welch's work, like in *The Death of Jim Loney* (1979), the cultural transplantation to France functions as a focal point for the protagonist to find his place away from a home that is being lost in America at the same time.

The presentation will focus on selected aspects of the novels chosen that highlight the implications for identity by changing places, especially with a focus on identity in exile.

**Lucia Krämer (U Hanover)**

**Far away, so close: Translocation in Hari Kunzru's *Transmission***

Hari Kunzru's *Transmission* (2004) belongs to the growing number of novels reflecting, through their content and their narrative technique, on the increasing interconnectedness of cultures and individuals in the age of globalisation. I would like to propose a reading of Kunzru's novel that emphasises the ambivalence of his depiction of translocation as a process, and of translocality as a condition, and which



interprets this ambivalence as a self-reflexive comment on the politics of storytelling in a postcolonial world.

*Transmission* is full of examples of processes of translocation simultaneously resulting from and perpetuating the increasingly interconnected nature of today's world. Its main characters move between various countries and continents, and their lives, thus the plot strands of the novel, are interlinked, for example, via travel and migration; the technical infrastructure of telephony and the internet; the global *lingua franca* English; and Bollywood cinema, one of the most conspicuous examples of cultural globalisation in recent years.

While Kunzru thus places the transfer of people, signs and texts in the globalised world at the centre of his novel and emphasises the mechanisms by which they are interlinked, he also insists on the ambivalence of global interconnectedness through his key metaphor of (noise in) transmission, and by providing his characters with a profound sense of isolation, dislocation and/or alienation. The disjunctive cultural flows depicted in *Transmission* thus lead to manifold losses of or inability to establish contact: both with oneself and with other people, both with local and translocal space and culture.

This depiction of translocation as a simultaneous drawing together and pulling apart is mirrored by Kunzru's narrative technique, which engages the reader in the characters' lives by means of intricate psychological portraits while at the same time creating distance through satire. Similarly, while the intermedial references to Bollywood films in *Transmission* emphasise the themes of difference and alienation, they also characterise stories as a repository of human universals and establish the pleasures provided by storytelling as a connecting device within a translocal space. *Transmission*, therefore, also contains an implicit reflection on its own status as a cultural product produced for a global audience.

### **Catherine Kroll (UC Berkeley)**

#### **A place at the table: South African indigenous foods and translocal appetites**

In order to understand how 'the locals' both represent themselves and are represented in mercantile contexts, this paper analyses two distinct *locales* of food culture: the indigenous foods project at the Mangaung township/University of Free State Partnership Project (MUCPP) and the expensive, yet homey South African 'coffee table' book *African Salad*, which is being marketed internationally. I examine the ways in which indigenous foods are represented – both as 'rediscovered' local foodways and as appetizing content for the book industry's marketing of the new, hip South Africa. I discuss the MUCPP indigenous foods project's repackaging of traditional food knowledge for local entrepreneurial ventures in Mangaung township, and I compare this effort to the marketing of South African food culture internationally. In this latter context, I consider what happens when food becomes exoticized, alienated from its everyday phenomenological setting and transported to the province of food 'experts' and hobbyists. In such transport both of food and of meaning, there is always the threat of spoilage, as the biologically and culturally nourishing value of food becomes desiccated through the production of mere *ideas* about it.

Conceiving of the Mangaung bakery venture as well as retail outlets in cyberspace as sites of translocal significance, I examine the following questions: How does food carry the significance of place and of heritage? How is the cultural, political, and economic meaning of food altered when it is transported away from its originating site? Given the dramatic economic imbalances between those represented in a text like *African Salad* and the affluent Westerners peering at the intimacies of their domestic spaces, what is at stake in the translocal consumption of culture? Is food a democratically neutral space, or is this just a concoction?

**Julia Kühn (U Hong Kong)**

### **Narrating transnationalism: How to write a grounded dispersion**

This paper is part of a larger book project: a collection of critical essays, entitled *China Abroad: Travels, Subjects, Spaces*, co-edited by me, and due to be published by Hong Kong University Press in 2009. My focus on 'Narrating Transnationalism' responds to the conference theme, 'Postcolonial Translocations', in various ways: having edited a number of critical essays that deal with diasporic Chineseness, as explored in travelogues, diaries, government and other writings of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, I have become particularly interested in theorizing the critical paradigm of the 'transnation' for the context of literary writings.

Sociologists like Aihwa Ong, in *Flexible Citizenship* (1998), have employed the concept of transnationality to explore the traffic of capital, people, labour in a postcolonial, globalized world. They have specifically emphasized the conflicting gravitational pulls that are inherent in such movement and theoreme: The stabilising concept of the *nation* is *transgressed* and *translated* in the transnation.

As convincing and commonsensical such sociological theorizations are, what is closer to the heart of the literary critic who analyses writers' accounts and fictions of such transnationalism, is how to, then, tell this double narrative of transnationalism; of *trans* and the *nation*, of the negotiation of dispersing and simultaneous grounding forces. It is here that this paper departs from the usual sociological elaborations and moves the focus firmly back into the literary and literary-critical realm: returning to Homi Bhabha's essay, 'DissemiNation' – much under researched in the context of transnationalism – I explore the hitherto unmade connections between transnationalism as concept and as narratological challenge.

**Bernd Peter Lange (U Magdeburg)**

### **Amitav Ghosh and the roots of mobility: *Sea of Poppies***

Amitav Ghosh is a cosmopolitan Indian writer whose fiction and other writings highlight different kinds of displacement and migration. In his works, he focuses on pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial types of mobility, upending the received Western perspectives on natives and their imperial others. In *Sea of Poppies*, the first part of a trilogy in progress, Ghosh employs the template of the historical novel to represent the social roots of enforced relocations in the transition period between slavery and indentured labour against the background of the Opium Wars of the British Empire.

**Yvette Smalle (U Leeds)**

**Carnival as a social pedagogy**

This paper will explore the contributions of carnival as a form 'social glue'. The importance of carnival as a tradition is its success at bringing people together from all sections of society. Although many writers have focused on carnival as a spectacle, this paper will explore other essential contributions that carnival has made. The focus will be of Leeds West Indian Community Carnival, the oldest Caribbean carnival in Britain, celebrating its 40<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2007. The Leeds West Indian Carnival continues the tradition of using carnival as a form of protest, sharing history, celebrating the body and having fun. This paper will argue that the Leeds Carnival offers a way of working that strengthens the spirit of community. It will also argue that Carnival operates as an invaluable repository for memories, while at the same time is engaged in a constant process of renewal and therein lies its success.

**Erika Laredo (U Leeds)**

**Carnival: The migrants story**

This paper examines carnival as a translocation of cultural practice and asks in what form it will survive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. For the incoming West Indian migrants, carnival wasn't simply a matter of clinging to nostalgic tradition, but the product of locally grounded power struggles. The paper seeks to determine to what extent the increasing commodification of culture has impacted on other readings of carnival as the locus of transgression and as the site of both resistance and critique to the dominant order. Do these changes render the political and transformative power of carnival meaningless? Or, is there a more meaningful reading which acknowledges that these changes form part of a wider and constantly evolving historical process of repeatedly negotiating difference and dialogical citizenship.

**Maria Lidola (FU Berlin)**

**Being/Becoming a Brazilian women in Berlin – almost ... but not quite (?)**

In order to contribute to the discussion about migrant places and in-between-spaces in a transnational context, this paper will place a special emphasis on identity constructions within the frame of the intersectionality of gender, (cultural) nationality and corporeality. The main focus will be on the confrontation and negotiation of different discourses and body-related signifying practices of Brazilian women living in Berlin, in which subject positionality is permanently relocated.

On the one hand, this entails not just to be different from all the other 'Ausländer' (foreigners), by being Brazilian in the way the dominant society imagines (female) *Brazilianness* and, at the same time, living one's own *Brazilianness*, which is also related to a diasporic identification with the homeland. On the other hand, due to the women's pre-migration biography and their motivation or decisions to migrate as well as their actual social situation, it also comprises the confrontation of desiring and/or trying to be a member of the local society and likewise fulfilling the expectations of being a Brazilian women the way it

is imagined in Brazilian transnational spaces, as, for example, it is manifested in the *comunidade*, which might be described as a kind of Brazilian Community in Berlin.

The paper will ask to which extent in-between spaces offer the possibility of specific forms of agency for women, and for their active positioning in migrant places, as well as how far these spaces actually exist for them. Due to extensive ethnographic fieldwork, particular consideration is given to the manifold women's narratives.

### **Chandani Lokuge (U Monash)**

#### **Postcolonial literary translocations of the nineteenth century: Toru Dutt (1856-1877)**

Toru Dutt was the first Indian woman poet and novelist to write in English. She lived in the heyday of the British Empire and belonged to the newly created Indian middle class. She was also one of the earliest Indian women to travel to Europe – England and France. Her correspondence, poetry and fiction resonate with the border-crossings and border regimes of her journeys as she sifted through Indian and European cultures, religions and literatures. This paper examines the thematics and aesthetics of Dutt's poetry and fiction and in the light of such border-crossings.

### **Gesa Mackenthun (U Rostock)**

#### **American antebellum cosmopolitanism: Herman Melville's 'postcolonial' translocations**

The paper approaches the work of American novelist Herman Melville from the theoretical/philosophical vantage point of contemporary debates about cosmopolitanism, global governance, and translocation. Melville's major work was published in the 1850s – at a period of intensifying conflict between nationalist and parochial ideas about America's role in the world on the one hand and the transatlantic formation of protest and reform movements on the other. World peace conferences were held in London, Brussels, Paris, and Frankfurt in the 1840s and were attended by American abolitionists like Frederick Douglass. While Melville's cosmopolitan vision is inspired by the decade leading up to the 1848 revolution, it similarly looks ahead to the American Civil War by critically investigating the failure of America's national promise of 'e pluribus unum.' Melville's texts, especially *Moby-Dick* (1851), have rarely been investigated with a view to their aestheticization of political rhetoric and have often been reduced to catastrophic prophecies of America's national destiny. This paper, by comparison, will explore the cosmopolitan discourse of Melville's classic novel within its historical and cultural context, taking as its theoretical lead recent comments on old and new cosmopolitanisms by Kwame Anthony Appiah, Ulrich Beck, and Seyla Benhabib. It will ask, among other things, whether the cosmopolitan vision of *Moby-Dick* conforms to an older 'representative universalism' or a modern 'complex universalism' (Matthew Binney), and it will ask what is postcolonial about Melville's cosmopolitan discourse.

**Peter H. Marsden (RWTH Aachen)**

### **Euro-Kiwis or deracinated emigrés? New Zealand writers in European residence**

In this paper, I propose to look at New Zealand authors who have visited Europe in their capacity as writers, officially representing (and funded by) their country of origin – whether as Katherine Mansfield Fellows in France (Menton), or as beneficiaries of the Goethe-Institut, the DAAD or Creative New Zealand residencies in Germany (Berlin), these are clearly cases of voluntary rather than forced relocation.

Some have gone straight back home; some have stayed. Some have learned the local language; some have actually studied and even used it; some have studiously avoided it. Some have topicalized their stay in Europe after returning Down Under; some have written about New Zealand while they were in Europe, from a sort of reverse Antipodean perspective. Some have felt just plain de-territorialized. Some feel the experience has made no direct thematic impact on their work but have discovered that it did prove catalytic in triggering new impulses, energies or directions.

My aim is to explore the impact of such residencies on the life and work of the authors concerned, and to see whether any pattern or patterns can be discerned. I am particularly interested in the details of how they actually represent the new location – the country of destination, as it were – or the translocation itself in literary terms.

**Thomas Martinek (U Vienna)**

### **Writing (in) the migrant space: Discursive nervousness in postcolonial Nigerian short stories**

The migrant has come to be 'the archetypal figure of our age'<sup>11</sup>. We live in a period of mass migration, and displacement has been transformed into a potent motif in postcolonial literature and theory.

The three short stories under consideration, Segun Afolabi's 'Moses', Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's 'You in America' and Ben Okri's 'A Hidden History', engage with migration on several levels. First, the authors were all born in Nigeria and have relocated themselves in the metropolis. Second, the main characters depicted in the short stories have similarly crossed borders into Great Britain and the United States, but quite in contrast to the writers, are condemned to 'a life lived on the cultural margins of modern society'<sup>12</sup>. Third, a major thematic preoccupation in the stories is the negotiation between the protagonists' position of liminality and the social, political and cultural mainstream.

Most importantly, the three texts show that writing (in) the migrant space can be more than a celebration of 'hybridity that is merely skin deep and a mere effect'<sup>13</sup>. The short stories do not shy away from a representation of the harsh realities of living in exile, do not romanticize the 'outsider' position of

---

<sup>11</sup> Salman Rushdie, "Step Across this Line", 415.

<sup>12</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, "At the Limits", 12.

<sup>13</sup> Radhakrishnan, "Adjudicating Hybridity, Co-ordinating Betweenness", <http://social.chass.ncsu.edu/jouvert/v5i1/radha.htm>

their protagonists, and do not homogenize the multifarious experiences of migration. Afolabi's minimalism, Adichie's deconstruction of exoticist representations, and Okri's uncanny hyperrealism create moments of radical 'textual indeterminacy'<sup>14</sup>, a discursive nervousness that is heightened by the very form of the short story – a genre that has often been conceived of as 'minor', 'liminal' or 'indeterminate'<sup>15</sup>. Writing the migrant space as short story thus leads to the emergence of Bhabha's 'Third Space of enunciation' – a performative strategy which ensures that experiences of migration can be 'appropriated, translated, re-historicized and read anew'<sup>16</sup> and which ultimately challenges structures of authority, received wisdom and cosmopolitan complacency.

Shorts stories discussed:

Afolabi, Segun. "Moses". *A Life Elsewhere*. London: Vintage, 2007.

Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. "You in America". *Discovering Home: A Selection of Writings from the 2002 Caine Prize for African Writing*. Bellevue: Jacana, 2003.

Okri, Ben. "A Hidden History". *Incidents at the Shrine*. London: Vintage, 1993.

**John Masterson (U Essex)**

### **Travel and/as travail: Postcolonial dislocations in Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* and Abdulrazak Gurnah's *By the Sea***

Postcolonial discourse is peppered with conceptual buzzwords such as 'hybridity,' 'liminality' and 'transnationalism.' Whilst having specific burdens of significance, they are often employed in more free-floating ways by figures including Homi Bhabha. This paper considers how two recent novels might be read against this grain in postcolonial theory, which can lead to an indiscriminate fetishising of transnational travel and travellers. Desai's 2006 Booker-winning text has been lauded for its lyrical exploration of diasporic flows of peoples and cultures, with the author herself marketed as a significant new voice on the world literary stage. Yet, such commendations oftentimes pay insufficient attention to those concerns with globalisation and dislocation so central to the novel's wider critique. Similarly, *By the Sea* attends to the material hardships faced by African asylum-seekers in Britain. Gurnah self-consciously alludes to and challenges Bhabha's liminal evocations of the half-light/half-life immigrant experience. In both novels, the trials and tribulations of passing through passport-control and establishing new 'homes' are intensely rendered and resonate with much broader debates. The term 'postcolonial' has achieved wide-ranging ubiquity, from BBC reports on Zimbabwe (June 2008) to surveys of contemporary African writers in *Vanity Fair* (July 2007). Whilst increasing coverage and awareness of such issues is to be welcomed, there appears an associated danger that the term's oppositional validity is being diluted. This has led certain commentators to suggest ours is now a 'post-postcolonial' world. If these seem merely semantic quibbles, politically prescient issues such as transnational migration and neo-colonial dispossession demand greater engagement. This paper considers how two novelists attend to some of

---

<sup>14</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 248.

<sup>15</sup> Mary Louise Pratt, "The Short Story: The Long and the Short of It", 96.

<sup>16</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 54-5.

these preoccupations. By reintroducing a contested sense of travail into their fictional explorations of travel, they prompt their readers to engage with rather than evade such salient debates.

### **Kazuhiro Masui (U Osaka)**

#### **Underground Tokyo and post-colonial Japan in Murakami Ryu's *In the Miso Soup***

Compared with Murakami Haruki, Murakami Ryu is a minor writer and his work seems little known in foreign countries. In my paper, I will focus on Murakami Ryu's *In The Miso Soup* (1997), and try to show how much the influence of the Second World War still remains and how modern American culture and its power still have an affect on postcolonial Japan.

Kenji, a protagonist who works as a 'nightlife guide' for foreign tourists, meets Frank, an American tourist, who wants Kenji to introduce him to Pink areas to satisfy his sexual desire in Kabuki-cho, Tokyo, Japan, in 1996. The motifs of sexual desire, violence and the shadow of the impotence of the protagonist and Japanese people in general can be considered as calculated metaphors for the socio-political milieu of mid-1990s Japan. How can we understand Frank's too aggressive violence and his hypnotic powers? As Frank says, Japan as a country lacks the 'history of being invaded and assimilated [...] most countries in Europe and the New World have in common', so people in Japan don't know how to treat outsiders.<sup>17</sup> Though it seems that Murakami openly criticize the ambiguous and impotent nature of Japanese people and society, if we consider Murakami's text as part of postcolonial literature, we may find the legacy of defeat in war against the U.S that still affects the Japanese today.

### **Alicia Menéndez Tarrazo (U Oviedo)**

#### **Writing the city as translocal space: Hyphenated narratives of Vancouver**

Vancouver is one of the most culturally and ethnically diverse cities in Canada: Recent census data reveal that at least two thirds of the adult population are connected to immigration in one way or another, either because they immigrated themselves, or because they were born in Canada to foreign-born parents. Thus, for a wide majority of Vancouver's population, processes of identity formation and social interaction are framed by the experience of immigration and the associated notions of displacement and belonging. Immigrant individuals and communities rely on the establishment of transnational networks of diasporic identification based on affective and emotional ties, not only to their countries of origin, but also to other locations of the diaspora they belong to; as a consequence, the city of Vancouver becomes an increasingly diasporic space in which different localities intersect and overlap.

This paper intends to explore the representation of Vancouver in contemporary fictional narratives, more specifically its construction as a translocal urban space in the work of so-called hyphenated-Canadian writers such as Indo-Canadian author Anita Rau Badami, Chilean-Canadian Carmen Rodríguez, and Chinese-Canadian Wayson Choy, among others. What is interesting about the work of these authors

---

<sup>17</sup> Murakami Ryu, *In The Miso Soup*. trans.Ralph McCarthy(Tokyo.1997), p.144

is that, in spite of the specificity of different diasporas and of particular immigrant experiences, all of them coincide in (re)presenting a Vancouver in which the past and the present, the near and the distant, the local and the global, are inevitably intertwined.

### **Melanie Mettler (U Bern)**

#### **Dislocated family – Translocated home**

Many notions associated with translocation are also in the focus of cosmopolitanism: home, location, movement and belonging. Are cosmopolitans at home everywhere in the world, an idea which is, after all, rather abstract? Does it imply that cosmopolitans do not have a 'real' home at all? Or is cosmopolitanism a concept, which allows us to analyse the notion of home as a 'detachable' construct, as something not necessarily tied to a particular location?

The interest of this paper lies with the interrelation of three levels of cosmopolitanism. Firstly, there is the level of the author.' Priya Basil was born in London in 1977. She spent her childhood in Kenya and now divides her time between London and Berlin'. 'While the quote from the jacket flap of Basil's novel *Ishq and Mushq* (2007) decidedly strives to position the author outside national and cultural borders, this paper questions how cosmopolitanism relates to the concept of home in Basil's novel. Therefore, secondly, the textual level traces a family (hi)story from India, to Kenya and Uganda, and finally London. The notion of home is explicitly translocated from geographical location and to a highly individualized construction within the family. Partly fascinated by the difference between the generations' notions of culture, it is also portrayed as a source of conflict and alienation amongst family members. Thirdly, on a theoretical level, cosmopolitanism is well suited to study the effects of translocation as they are discussed in literary texts not based on hybridized blending, but as proposing forms of community offering the chance to address an underlying eirenic urge.

### **Sandra Meyer (U Duisburg-Essen)**

#### **'The Story that gave this Land its Life': The translocation of Rilke's Duino Elegies in Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide***

Amitav Ghosh's novel *The Hungry Tide* (2004) contains two intertexts from culturally distinct backgrounds: Whereas one of them is a local story called *The Glory of Bon Bibi*, the other is a piece of transnationally acclaimed poetry, namely Rainer Maria Rilke's *Duino Elegies*. Thus, a famous piece of poetry originally written in German is dislocated and integrated into a postcolonial novel dealing with India's past, present and, possibly, future. In Ghosh's text, however, the elegies – which the protagonist reads in a Bangla translation – appear in substantial extracts in English translation.<sup>18</sup> Thus, doubly mediated, the Rilke text also comes generally to represent the problems arising when translating from one

---

<sup>18</sup> For a critical study on the English translations of Rilke's poetry cf. Roy Woods, *Rilke through a glass darkly: The poetry of R.M. Rilke and its English translations. A critical comparison*. Trier, 1996



language and its culture into another, and the problematic nature of language, translation and interpretation in general.

My paper will try to show that the translocation of Rilke's *Duino Elegies* is not only interesting from the point of view of translation<sup>19</sup>, but that key notions of the poems themselves add enormously to the tone and the multiple levels of meaning in the novel. In fact, many passages of *The Hungry Tide* could be read as illustrations of the *Duino Elegies* and vice versa. Thus, the poems originally written in German seem to emphasise several major topics of the novel and of Indian society at the same time. The translocation also once more raises the question if and in how far postcolonial and postmodern literary strategies overlap or differ and about the ways in which postcolonial texts with consistent intertextual references to classic 'Western' texts appeal to implied target audiences in different cultures.

**Sara Duana Meyer (U Osnabrück)**

### **'Bombay, meri jaan': Relocating subjectivity in a maximum city's literature**

In an age of 'turns', we have just reached another one – city-dwellers have outnumbered those living in rural areas and mega-cities seem to become the predominant form of urban life. The essential spatiality of urban phenomena has been a perpetual topos in many (literary) texts emblematic for their times. However, the term 'global city' stands proof for an increasing incommensurability which not only changes the urban space itself but also the modes of literary representation, questioning more than ever the readability and 'tellability' of the city.

Today urban images are coined by the metropolises of so-called underdeveloped countries, where boundaries between several worlds simultaneously overlap and fissure, thus constituting multilayered, translocal identities in a network of global urbanism. Even so, current 'Bombay Literature' seems not only to accept, but to use the increasing incomprehensiveness of the mega-city. In recent texts by Mistry, Tyrewala, Chandra, and others, Mumbai/Bombay is neither portrayed in a minute account of urban totality, nor is the immensity of the megalopolis turned into a surreal place – instead, their literature reproduces distinctive personal topographies that transcend and simultaneously reaffirm the 'real' city. This might be read as a global reassessment of locality that comes along with the dissolution of local culture and aims at a global readership – or, as I suggest, as yet, a new form of city literature and the attempt to relocate subjectivity in a translocated urban world.

---

<sup>19</sup> So far, the fact that Rilke's poetry plays an important role in Ghosh's novel has only been paid attention to with regard to the fact that it appears in a translated version (Cf. Christopher Rollason, "In Our Translated World': Transcultural Communication in Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide*", in: *The Atlantic Literary Review*. Vol 6, 1, 2005, 86-107). This is of course an important fact, but it neglects the "content" of the *Duino Elegies* and its connection to one of the central themes apparent in the novel.

**Michael Mitchell (U Warwick)**

### **Ethnic diversity in the UK**

After the period of major post-war immigration to Britain from the Caribbean and the Indian subcontinent, we used to speak about 'minorities' and how they might be integrated into UK society. In the last few years, however, global migration of people seeking economic and political security, and an unprecedented influx from Eastern Europe, have resulted in 'super-diversity' and completely new ways of thinking about identity, and what it means to be British in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This presentation suggests ways in which teachers might introduce this topic in their teaching of classes leading to the Abitur.

**Andrea Moll (U Freiburg)**

### **The globalization of Jamaican Creole: A web-based analysis of short-term historical trends and the current dynamics of language contact**

The increasing global presence of Jamaican Creole (hence JC) due to large-scale migration of Jamaicans after the WWII period, the continued use of JC in Reggae music around the globe, as well as its presence in web-based communication since the 1990s, has led to complex linguistic contact situations between JC and other standard and non-standard varieties of English. Taking the emergence of post-native varieties like British Black English, which functions as a symbol of ethnic identity for Jamaicans living in the diaspora (Patrick 2004; Sebba 1993), and the phenomenon of crossing first observed by Rampton in 1995 as a theoretical starting point, part of this project focuses on the written use of JC in computer-mediated communication (hence CMC) by analysing a large-scale corpus of posts (currently four million words) taken from web-based discussion forums, which serve as a communicative platform for Jamaicans, including Jamaicans living in the diaspora. One of the aims of this project is to systematically document the process of linguistic normalization in the written representation of JC in this part of the world-wide web over the last fifteen years, paying special attention to the emergence of an orthographic norm as well as to the use of morphosyntactic variants. In this context, pilot studies have interestingly revealed that basilectal morphosyntactic features seem to be overrepresented in CMC, pointing at a highly-mediated, stylised form of JC. Another important aspect of the project is to assess the degree of functional autonomy that 'Cyber Creole' has acquired in comparison to the spoken Creole continuum (Patrick 1999) and other traditional forms of writing – as, for example, literature – by using discourse analysis to focus on the variable discourse-specific potential of JC and its extralinguistic cultural correlates. In addition, the influence of JC on standard and non-standard varieties of English needs further investigation as it has only rarely been documented yet. This project therefore also concentrates on the influence of crossing on systemic language change in non-Jamaican or Caribbean varieties of English as, for example, British and American Standard English, as well as African American Vernacular English. In this context, attention will also be paid to the indexical status of JC as a symbolic code used by global communities of practice (Mair 2003). Considering empirical and methodological

aspects, the project thus aims at making an innovative contribution to the study of varieties of English, as well as systematically using the world-wide web for complex sociolinguistic and diachronic research.

References:

- Mair, Christian. 2003. "Language, code and symbol: The changing roles of Jamaican Creole in diaspora communities." *Arbeiten aus Anglistik und Amerikanistik* 28 (2): 231–248.
- Patrick, Peter L. 1999. *Urban Jamaican Creole: Variation in the Mesolect*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Patrick, Peter L. 2004. "Jamaican Creole: Morphology and Syntax." *A Handbook of Varieties of English. Vol II: Morphology and Syntax*, Bernd Kortmann et al. (ed.). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 407-438.
- Sebba, M. 1993. *London Jamaican: Language Systems in Interaction*. London: Longman.
- Rampton, Ben. 1995. *Crossing: Language and Ethnicity among Adolescents*. London: Longman.

**Susanne Mühleisen (U Bayreuth)**

**'... allyuh know how to parteeeeeeeeeeee. lawd! ' Linguistic choices and community construction among Trinidadians in California**

The interconnection between language use and speaker identity/identification has long been recognised in sociolinguistics (cf. Coulmas 2005, Tabouret-Keller 1997). In Diaspora communities, the desire to either signal one's membership in the group that connects the speaker with the ancestral community, or to obscure such a belonging and blend in with the majority community, is part of a complex interplay between language maintenance and language shift, which involves a number of dynamic processes of accommodation, code-switching and linguistic acts of self-assertion.

While linguistic performances of identity are made unconsciously and smoothly in face-to-face conversations and are, therefore, well researched (cf. Tabouret-Keller 1997), written communication has rarely been investigated with regard to their value as acts of identification. With an increasing use of 'oral-like' written communication in chats and internet forums, orthographic flexibility and the use of non-standard features in writing have become highly common (cf. Hinrichs 2006).

This paper investigates markers of Trinidadian English Creole employed in the internet forum 'TT California' (*Trinidad & Tobago Possee Livin California*) by Trinidadian users who are living in California. The purpose of the internet forum is to connect Trinidadian Diaspora members and to exchange information on events, contacts, etc. Due to the mediated form of communication, it is argued where physical markers, tone of voice, etc. cannot be employed to establish one's right to membership in this forum. Special linguistic features with a high value of marking 'Trinidadian-ness' are used extensively. In my paper, I will explore the use of orthographic markers, as well as the use of 'allyuh' (Trinidadian, cf. Mühleisen in print) versus 'you guys' (American), as second person plural forms.

- Coulmas, Florian (2005). *Sociolinguistics. The Study of Speakers' Choices*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Hinrichs, Lars. (2006). *Code-Switching on the Web: English and Jamaican Creole in Email Communication*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Mühleisen, Susanne. im Druck. (2009). "Forms of address and ambiguity in Caribbean Creoles: Strategic interactions in a postcolonial language situation," in Richard Janney & Eric Anchimbe, eds. *Postcolonial Pragmatics. Journal of Pragmatics* (Special Issue).
- Tabouret-Keller, Andrée (1997). "Language and Identity." In: Florian Coulmas, ed. *The Handbook of Sociolinguistics*. Oxford: Blackwell, 315-326.
- Porter, James. (1992). *Audience and Rhetoric: An Archaeological Composition of the Discourse Community*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

**Savi Munjal (U Leeds)**

### **Afghanistan's endless war: Preserving cultural heritage through translocation**

This paper will seek to show how literary interventions by subaltern diasporic authors writing in English help to preserve the cultural heritage (including traditional oral literature, dance, music, knowledge and including women's narratives in recorded histories) of war-torn Asian countries by introducing the Western world to the cleavages of the same. By doing this, they metamorphose from being 'dislocated' migrants to 'translocated' citizens of the world.

For this reason, I will concentrate on the multiple 'lived' realities of Islamic peoples in Afghanistan<sup>1</sup>. Such an interrogation is increasingly important in a post 9/11 world where Islam is often simplistically equated with fundamentalism. I will look at a series of historical and literary representations of the Afghan community and their importance for chronicling a collective identity for Afghanistan. In an age of historiographic crisis, authors such as Khalid Hosseini articulate collective memory through a system of signs, symbols, and practices, dates, names of places, customs and manners and language<sup>20</sup>.

I will go on to show how fictional accounts depict Afghani 'women' as real, material subjects of their collective histories in order to steer clear of the homogeneity conventionally accorded to women and to show the various kinds of oppression, both physical and psychological, which have been meted out to women of various classes and ethnicities over the years in Afghanistan<sup>3</sup>. I will use Hosseini's literary accounts, poetic accounts by Imtiaz Dharker and Kishwar Naheed, interviews of Afghan refugees conducted by the UNHCR, and a 1997 interview of Maulvi Qalamuddin, Deputy Director of *Amr bil-Marooif wa Nahi An il-Munkir*, the Department responsible for Promotion of Virtue and Suppression of Vice, the most powerful arm of the Taliban, to unveil the claustrophobia associated with *Purdah* and draw attention to the excessive violations against women even before the Taliban came into power in Afghanistan.

The final aim of this presentation is to show how cultural profiling by 'dislocated' authors and poets can actually help to draw attention to geographically distant (and politically fraught) nations, ultimately helping them to articulate a theory of empowerment that pays attention to voices which have been marginalised by disciplinary and normalising power regimes and create a space for oppositional politics.

**Marga Munkelt (U Münster)**

### **Myths of rebellion: Translocation and (cultural) innovation**

This paper will trace and evaluate formations and transformations of rebellion in selected texts from the Bible to Mexican-American literature. The investigation assumes the transformation of myths as translocation in two senses: its transportation into a different historical or cultural context, on the one

---

<sup>20</sup> For instance Hosseini introduces various Afghani words to the English-speaking reader: - *Parchami* (community), *tashakor* (thank you), *tassali* (condolence), *Roussi* (Russian), *salaam* (hello), *bachem* (child), *nang* (honor) and *namoos* (pride) in his novels *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, both international bestsellers.

hand, and its transformation within a different ideological framework, on the other. Lucifer's sin, his pride, results in his loss of God's grace and, physically, in his expulsion from heaven to hell. Milton's Satan, however, does not accept the result of his rejection by God as a denigrating punishment for his disobedience and, instead, redefines the loss as a gain when he protests that it is 'Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heav'n' (*Paradise Lost* I: 263).

The principles of disobedience and rebellion find yet another expression in those mythical characters whose rebellion has altruistic, if not utopian, motivations. The Robin Hood figure, for example, does not assume a godlike position but, rather, intends to implement God's intentions. This kind of rebel violates the rules of society in order to correct them.

It is particularly in the early stages of the Chicano Movement that a fusion of the Lucifer/Satan/Robin Hood characters is used by Chicano writers to formulate the need for a Mexican-American identity of self-esteem, for an ethnic or even national identity, and for an escape from disgrace and poverty. Thus, many protagonists in the *corrido* become outlaws themselves in order to secure 'the law' for their countrymen, whereas the *Pachuco* figure (originally from Latin-American literature) protests against mainstream authorities by emphasising his otherness (often in terms of ethnic attributes and clothes) or by affiliating with an ethnic, political or criminal organisation. The development of a subculture is thus used to counterbalance one's exclusion or expulsion from 'paradise.'

### **Delphine Munos (U Liège)**

#### **Giving up the ghosts: Diaspora and its hereafter in *Once in a Lifetime* by Jhumpa Lahiri**

In spite of diasporic subjectivity being recurrently conceptualised through a rhetoric of 'fluidity,' 'multiple affiliations,' and 'national non-attachment,' today's literature of the Indian diaspora reveals that the 'un-transnational' ideology of the return is still running deep in the first and second-generation migrant imaginary. Vijay Mishra's recent attempt to explore the idea of 'writing diaspora' in an analogy with writing trauma or writing mourning is illuminating in this respect because it constitutes a theoretical framework able to bear witness to the maintenance of a diasporic imaginary structured by the loss of the Motherland, whether this loss involves firsthand experience of migration or originates from a 'phantom loss' refigured by the second generation.

Drawing on Mishra's theorizing of the diasporic imaginary, my paper will explore Jhumpa Lahiri's representation of the second generation's 'inheritance of loss' in 'Once in a Lifetime,' the short-story opening *Unaccustomed Earth's* trilogy. By narrating Hema's and Kaushik's parallel journey from childhood to early adulthood, Lahiri rewrites the notion of return as melancholic attachments through which the unsymbolizable gap left by the absence of the Motherland can be represented, renegotiated and perhaps, then, put to rest. In my paper, I wish to show that not only does Lahiri use melancholy as a means of representing second-generation subjectivities haunted by impossible mourning and unclaimed legacies, but also that she rehabilitates the notion of return as a way of envisaging a diasporic future that

is swarming with ghosts. In that sense, Lahiri illustrates that the notion of homeland and the trope of the return can also be associated with a promise of futurity.

**Katharina Luise Nambula (U Bayreuth)**

**Identity transformations in conflict situations: Physical and psychological translocations in the novel *Waiting* by Goretti Kyomuhendo**

In Uganda, war situations of the last centuries have caused physical and psychological displacements of families, as well as whole communities. Especially women have suffered severely from the torments of conflict. In her novel *Waiting*, the Ugandan authoress Goretti Kyomuhendo picks up this topic by describing a family in a state of emergency as a result to Idi Amin's terror dictatorship. The family members are not just dislocated from their regular life, but also the whole village set-up is changed through the extreme effects of war. Furthermore, as a direct result of violence experienced by the members of the community, the different characters are displaced from their familiar life and the roles they used to play. The paper will show how the authoress uses the motif of conflict to stress the changes in the characters' identities. Due to the violent death of two family members, the whole community is forced to restructure itself in order to bring life back to stability. Although the male characters tend not to cope with the situation, the women are quick at developing the required strength after a crucial situation triggers the rearrangement of the community.

**Lynda Ng (U of New South Wales, Sydney)**

**Translocal temporalities in Alexis Wright's *Carpentaria***

Postcolonial studies, like the concept of the nation itself, has struggled in recent years to argue for its continued relevance in a world of accelerated globalisation and internationalisation. Further study into translocal representation has been necessitated by our progression into a later stage of capitalism and the debated breakdown of national boundaries. Studies in postcolonialism and nationalism have often confined themselves within geographic, spatial boundaries. But once translocality is introduced, the temporal element becomes of prime importance, for any translocal movement between two spaces cannot be discussed without situating it between two moments in time.

Postcolonial translocations demand an engagement with world-literature paradigms such as Franco Moretti's morphology of genres and Pascale Casanova's *Republic of World Letters*. This paper will attempt to take the first step in bringing these two theoretical approaches together and show how a novel like Alexis Wright's *Carpentaria* consciously operates as a translocal text, both in terms of its influences and in the way it positions the Australian nation within a global context. In this novel the more traditional rhythms of indigenous Australia are integrated with the empty, homogeneous time of a modern, late-capitalist Australia, and Wright hints at how postcolonial studies may transition into a transnational world.

**Max C. Oestersötebier (U Münster)**

### **Can you hear the translocations? The 'New Congo Square'**

Myth has it that jazz was 'born' on Congo Square in New Orleans. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the hybridization of several Diaspora cultures led to the rise of a new culture in its own right. Jazz – often metonymously used for New Orleans' overall musical heritage and culture – amalgamated traditions West African, Caribbean, and European rhythm, harmony, and instrumentation. Apart from its musicological uniqueness, the rise of jazz culture marks the beginning of a genuinely American protest culture. Showing the symptoms of a post-colonial subculture, jazz revolted against the socio-political reality of the Jim Crow South. It promoted a pluralistic multicultural society.

In 2001, a highly-praised project band named 'Los Hombres Calientes' from New Orleans released an album titled *New Congo Square*, which was nominated for a Grammy Award and thereby received worldwide recognition. It was the third album of a series of five (to date), and the choice of its title resourcefully describes the scope and implications of the project: Trumpeter Irvin Mayfield and drummer Bill Summers sought to establish a new, imaginary, Congo Square by joining contemporary New Orleans musicians and contemporary musicians from the place of historical influence on one and the same album. They had recorded some of their material in New Orleans, and they had travelled to Mali, Ghana, Brazil, Trinidad, Haiti, Jamaica and other places to record with local musicians, whom they had never met before, in the local style. The album stages diverse musical genres and cultures. It is a return to the mythical idea of Congo Square; yet, it is today's sound of New Orleans.

In my paper, I am arguing that the 'New Congo Square' unifies cultural translocations in the re-creation of a specific place. I understand the audio CD as a cultural text, which represents, acknowledges, and gives voice to the different cultural translocations that enabled the development of New Orleans' musical heritage. Yet the 'New Congo Square' is more than just a home in Diaspora: new original place is created, work on myth (cf. Blumenberg) is done, and the contemporary hybrid culture of New Orleans re-establishes one of its mythical institutions.

Without a doubt, New Orleans musical culture has always shown signs of what Jan Nederveen Pieterse describes as a 'global mélange.' Arguably, its genesis is an audible by-product of globalization, migration, displacement by force, and cultural hybridization. The idea of the 'New Congo Square,' however, not only perpetuates the old Congo Square myth: The musicians travel back to the original places of influence in order to 'find' New Orleans (or what it constitutes) and they re-create the city's musical heritage somewhere in an imaginary space all over the Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea and finally sell their results to a worldwide audience.

The 'New Congo Square,' a quest for identity and cultural roots, epitomizes the effects of postcolonial translocation on artistic expression in New Orleans. I will, therefore, portray the Los Hombres Calientes project and discuss the pertinent developments in past and present New Orleans from the perspective of translocal representation.

**Chukwuma Okoye (U Ibadan)**

**Of 'Space' and 'Place': Wole Soyinka and the (Dis)Location of Postcolonial Theory**

Mainstream postcolonial thinking, particularly implicated in the critical thoughts (and lifestyles) of Homi Bhabha and Chakravorty Spivak, privileges 'space' over 'place', mobility, travel, fluidity and transnationality over location, locale, nationality and geography. On the other hand, Wole Soyinka's critical position, gleaned from his creative and critical exertions, seems to privilege place over space; a certain kind of locationality, a 'placement' of cultural critique over its displacement. In this essay I examine the various concepts of space in postcolonial theory (such as Bhabha's Third Space) and Soyinka's construction of 'place' (especially implicated in his concept of the 'Fourth Stage') and respectively cast them in discursive and performative (literary and embodied) models. Taking a trip through postcolonial theory I hope to observe how differently 'postcolonial' Soyinka's somewhat nativist and essentialist strategy is from mainstream postcolonial theory's critical habits. Exploring such influential theoretical models as hybridity, ambivalence and mimicry, I suggest that Soyinka's 'Stage' is one of cultural certainty and intransigence rather than compromise and mediacy; one of embodiment rather than discourse. I hope to argue that it is for these reasons that Stephen Slemon wonders why Soyinka 'is rendered surprisingly and radically absent from postcolonial studies as a *thinker*' but 'hypercanonized as a *figure*.'

**Oyeniye Okunoye (U Bayreuth)**

**Postcolonial renaming and the Nigerian tradition of short fiction**

Arguments as to whether modern African states can be regarded as nations on account of the circumstances surrounding their emergence have also influenced debates about the possibility of national literary traditions in Africa. This paper seeks to engage these two issues in the course of theorising the Nigerian tradition of the short story.

The paper critiques attempts at applying any universal epistemology of the nation in engaging the African experience. It argues that African states took a unique path to nationhood – the process it describes as nation-building or postcolonial renaming – and suggests that the conscious forging of national identity in the states that emerged out of inherited colonial structures can only be understood in this sense. With particular reference to Nigeria, it establishes the connection between the project of nation-formation and the transformation of the Nigerian space through a combination of cultural nationalism, national integration and the subversion of colonial geography. It then demonstrates the sense in which Nigerian short fiction, as part of a vast and dynamic sphere of cultural production, is implicated in the grand task of inventing a national identity.



**Ebenezer A. Omoteso (U Ile-Ife)**

### **Contratado: Forced relations in Lusophone African Poetry**

In practice, colonialism was a very traumatic experience for the colonized all over Africa. The horrible lot of the contract worker, called *contratado*, *monangamba*, *magaíza*, in Lusophone Africa is therefore symptomatic of the misery of the average African, especially the men, 'forced' and 'exported' to work in foreign lands (S. Tomé, South Africa, etc). This paper thus seeks to analyse the representation and significance of this important poetic persona. A figure of translocation and a veritable economic refugee, for him, far from being paradise the translocal place was characterized by excruciating misery, hopelessness, and death.

**Melanie Otto (Trinity College Dublin)**

### **Mutant children and divine infants: Hybridity and alterity in Keri Hulme's short fiction**

Keri Hulme is best known for her Booker-Prize winning novel *The Bone People* (1984) in which she explores what critics have called her bi-cultural project of weaving together the different traditions that constitute contemporary New Zealand society. Hulme herself is of mixed European and Maori ancestry and expresses the need to acknowledge all of these facets in her writing. Accordingly, aspects of Maori, Celtic and Norse mythology are present in her texts, as are fragments of Maori language and echoes of European literature. Criticism on her work tends to focus on her novel and her use of Maori heritage, partly because the author insists that she feels all Maori by spirit and inclination, and also because *The Bone People* is a watershed event that helped to bring Maori writing to international attention when it won the Booker Prize.

Much of Hulme's short fiction and poetry, however, has received little or no critical attention, which may be due to its themes that do not quite 'fit' into discussions about bi-culturality and postcoloniality. Otto Heim, one of the few critics who has written on her short fiction, classes Hulme's work as distinctly postmodern, arguing that it 'articulates a discursive conflict, a certain refusal to be fully identified with the discourses one must use' (*Writing Along Broken Lines*, Auckland: Auckland UP, 1998, p. 106). Her short fiction, particularly *Te Kaihau/The Windeater* (1986) and *Stonefish* (2004), exhibits precisely this 'refusal to be fully identified with the discourses one must use' and interrogates postcolonial themes such as hybridity and the very notions of culture, civilization, and imperialism from a perspective that goes beyond the socio-historical framework of postcolonial studies.

In this paper, I want to take a closer look at how Hulme questions the concepts of hybridity and bi-culturality by exploring not only the borders between cultures, but also, if not more so, those between the human and the non-human. Her work thus crosses over into the field of ecocriticism, as well as into debates and themes found in the area of genre literature, such as science fiction, fantasy, and the gothic tradition. By doing so, Hulme's work interrogates not only the limits of the human but also those of postcolonial studies.

**Claudia Perner (U Duisburg-Essen)**

**Dislocating Imagology, And: How Much of It Can (or Should) Be Retrieved?**

As a discipline of comparative literary studies, imagology reached its climax in the 1970s and 1980s. In the field of postcolonial studies, imagological research has been and remains a frequent visitor. While Edward Said's *Orientalism* represents imagological scholarship at its most elegant and thought provoking, imagological approaches have also inspired rather bland types of inquiry. With the increasing prominence of theories of globalisation and transculturality, imagology has been forced to finally acknowledge a basic dilemma: In a world of eroding borders and shifting boundaries, how much sense does a theoretical school make that relies so centrally on the existence of precisely such borders? Needless to say, the fact that some scholars have attempted to reinvent imagology as 'intercultural hermeneutics' has not solved this problem. Nevertheless, imagological research continues to be around and occasionally still leads to interesting results. The guiding questions of my paper thus are: How much dislocation can imagology take? Has its objective simply been displaced in a world of shifting locations? To answer these questions, I will suggest and test a number of rereadings of imagology.

**Susanne Pichler (U Innsbruck)**

**Binding and framing experience in trans-local spaces: Aamer Hussein's *Mirror to the Sun* and Sunetra Gupta's *The Glassblower's Breath***

Experiences of migration and dwelling-in-displacement impinge upon the lives of an ever increasing number of people world-wide. Since the early 1990s, the cultural, social and political realities of global migration have led to a growing interest in the different forms of diasporic existence and identity. But, one may ask, what is the range of experiences covered by the term diasporic existence and identity? Where does it begin to lose definition? I approach diasporic identity as 'threshold' (Probyn: 1996, 35), as a location that, by definition, frames the passage from one space to another; identity as transition, always producing itself through the combined processes of being and becoming, of longing to belong, of belongings constituted through movement and attachment, be it to other people, places, or modes of being, a 'process fuelled by yearning rather than the positing of identity as stable' (Probyn: 1996, 19). Part of the formation of belonging, then, is identity as a momentary 'positionality' (cf. Hall: 1996) that is always already becoming. Unravelling the project of identity – personal, diasporic, or cultural – means to identify the momentary points of attachment, or points of 'suture,' in Hall's words (1996), as well as the productive tension between the outside and the inside, between the inner world and the outer world, between 'home' and 'absence of home', between dis-location and emplacement – if we take nodes of departure and destination to exist, between various new locations – trans-locations, as it were, consisting of fractured and variously connected spaces – we leave the points of departure and destination open.

In my reading of two South Asian diasporic writers' (cf. Nasta: 2000, 96) narratives, – Aamer Hussein's short story collection *Mirror to the Sun* (1993) and Sunetra Gupta's *The Glassblower's Breath*

(1993), we will observe that they deal with concepts of movement, place, and space, as well as with trans-phenomena on a number of different, yet interrelated planes. Their primary concern is to write 'home' from a series of multiple locations, geographical as well as mental, to write the diasporic stories of individual lives based on personal – and sometimes highly private – fragments of memories in a variety of differently imagined geographies. These fragments coupled with the imagination these spark off, become central to the identity of the migrant abroad, who, an explorer on a voyage of discovery, and 'constantly subject to mutation' (Chambers: 1994, 5), connects not only the fragmentary episodic memories *en route* but also joins together the spaces and places left behind on his / her itinerary. Not only the writers themselves but also their protagonists articulate a sensibility which may well stem from a specific location but which nevertheless creates an imaginative facility to live freely in the world at large, which resists containment by either the frames of the past left behind or the refractions of the present, since boundaries are always deferred, always in translation.

References:

- Chambers, Iain. *Migrancy, culture, identity*. London: Routledge, 1994.
- Hall, Stuart. "Introduction: Who Needs Identity?" Eds. Stuart Hall, and Paul du Gay. *Questions of Cultural Identity*. London: SAGE Publications, 1996. 1-17.
- Gupta, Sunetra. *The Glassblower's Breath*. London: Orion, 1993.
- Hussein, Aamer. *Mirror to the Sun*. London: Mantra, 1993.
- Nasta, Susheila. "New Voices in South Asian Writing in Britain." Eds. Ralph J. Crane and Radhika Mohanram. *Shifting Continents / Colliding Cultures. Diaspora Writing of the Indian Subcontinent*. Amsterdam, Atlanta: Editions Rodopi, 2000. 83-101.
- Probyn, Elspeth. *Outside Belongings*. New York, London: Routledge, 1996.

**Abioseh M. Porter (U Drexel)**

**More than mere 'dislocation': Translocation in the poetry of J.P. Clark and Syl Cheney-Coker**

The manifold creative and, indeed, poetic powers of John Pepper Clark and Syl Cheney-Coker are taken for granted in contemporary discussions of African literature. One area, however, in which both of these authors can be said to have overwhelmed readers is in the sheer potency of some of these writers' poetry, especially those poems which evoke a new sense of trans-located space through the media of painting and the visual arts. The artistry and poignancy of both poets are often so powerful that an almost exclusive attention is paid only to the more obvious themes of their writing. This essay proposes to demonstrate that because Clark and Cheney-Coker have used their respective worlds as a visual and poetic canvass, this technique has allowed their richly-endowed minds to wander with ease not from one topic to the other but especially from one part of the world to various others. In other words, these two writers have written poems that show what poems do and not simply what they mean. Using powerful visual imagery that allow some of their poems to read like paintings, Clark and Cheney-Coker have indeed succeeded in speaking about the world(s) in which they have lived not only by injecting the artistic form of painting in their writing but also by being oblivious to any sense of any geographical, racial, or nationalistic restriction in their artistic lives. Poems such as Clark's 'Abiku,' 'Agbor Dancer,' 'Ibadan,' 'Times Square,' 'Cuba Confrontation,' 'Home from Hiroshima,' 'Cave Call,' (from *Collected Poems* and Cheney-Coker's 'New Year in Freetown, 1999,' 'Our Lady of Diamonds,' 'The Meaning of

Rivers,' 'New Frontier' (from his latest collection, *Stone Child and Other Poems*), will be used as examples of the strengths of these writers' multivalent and multi-vocal artistry. As true citizens of a complex world, they have used language quite successfully to present the multi-dimensional and at times very confusing world in which they live.

**Gregor Pudzich (U Duisburg-Essen)**

**Crossing the great water: Representations of forced and voluntary relocations in Lawrence Hill's *The Book of Negroes***

One might say that African-Canadian literature is obsessed with representations of relocations. During the last two and a half decades a number of authors have tried retrospectively to make sense of, or at least to make an attempt to describe the enforced relocations of their ancestors through fictionalization. Their forerunners in history, those writers who tried to turn their own lives into words borrowed from a strange tongue, are a point of reference for these narratives, but the need to turn this unspeakable past into public knowledge is of prevailing importance for African Canadian authors. Since forced relocation logically precedes diasporas, these texts are situated in the field of tension between representations of relocation and Diaspora literature – and both perspectives are important for an adequate discussion.

Therefore I would like to propose a reading of Lawrence Hill's last novel *The Book of Negroes*, which includes diachronic and synchronic perspectives. My aim is to show in how far a relocation story like Hill's novel might be linked to the shaping of the Canadian cultural discourse; first by creating an awareness of the problematic history, and secondly by showing in how far these topics are related to the present situation of African Canadians. Referring to the enormous success of *The Book of Negroes*, which has been on the bestseller list for more than twenty weeks, the relevance of the topic and its appeal to readers is obvious. But as narratives like Hill's are objects as well as interventions in an ongoing discourse about African Canadian identity, the mechanisms by which they rework the past are as important as the cultural position which they occupy. Due to this problematic position I suggest a reading of these texts as rephrased founding myths, serving as part of the collective memory and fostering aspects of African Canadian ethnic identity.

As the relationship between history and memory has long been a central paradigm of cultural studies, the theoretical approaches regarding these topics abound. Contrary to Jan Assmann's theoretical reconsideration of the Exodus from Egypt, which is one of the most important narratives with regard to Judeo-Christian cultural identity, translocation in the case of African North-Americans often signifies the process of deracination and enslavement. In this context the concept of translocation is especially valuable because it does not only apply to the way into slavery, but might also be applied to describe the different stages of liberation and the coming to terms with history, crucial for black North Americans till today. Therefore the various conceptual approaches towards the term and the processes they imply might even shed a different light on stories of translocation- and diaspora literature. Consequently, using Hill's

novel as an example, it would make sense to examine which kind of translocations it deals with, and whether it also functions as a 'figure of memory,' following Assmann's terminology once again.

### **Anca-Raluca Radu (U Göttingen)**

#### **Michael Ondaatje and the cosmopolitan novel *Divisadero***

Although critics have reviewed *Divisadero* as a manifestation of Ondaatje's multicultural worldview, this paper suggests that it is a cosmopolitan novel. This reading of the novel takes into account its combination of de-essentialised ethical concerns with transnational geographical and political identities. Moreover, it deals with its deconstruction of literary conventions and the way these reflect, formally, Ondaatje's preoccupation with the role of writing and the responsibility of the writer towards his/her readers. Finally, the implied reader him/herself receives special attention as a member of a transnational reader community.

Unlike 'old' cosmopolitanism with its homogeneous definition of identity, the 'new' cosmopolitanism manifest in Ondaatje's novel underscores the heterogeneity of identity and history as well as literary texts. Both its fictional and metafictional dimensions reflect an unauthoritative understanding of these issues.

The suggested methodology does not contribute to a reading of cosmopolitanism as a manifestation of deracination. Following Appiah, this paper agrees that the 'cosmopolitan ideal' is to 'take your roots with you' ('Cosmopolitan Patriots' 622), which also becomes apparent in the protagonists' search for identity in the novel. On the metafictional level, it is the ethic responsibility of both author and reader towards each other that frames this cosmopolitan novel.

### **Wumi Raji (U Ile Ife)**

#### **Cosmopolitanism and a Nigerian postcolonial video film**

This paper attempts an application of the theory of cosmopolitanism to the analysis of a Nigerian postcolonial video film. In their jointly authored paper 'Unpacking Cosmopolitanism for the Social Sciences: a Research Agenda' Ulrich Beck and Sznaider project cosmopolitanism as entailing a de-ontologization of the idea of the sovereign nation – state, the transcending of all kinds of parochial affiliations (ethnic, religious, cultural), the promotion of transnational affinities and a celebration of the concepts of fluidity, mobility and identity transgressions.

Beck and Sznaider are both social scientists but I consider their perspective of cosmopolitanism helpful since my concern in investigating *Abeni*, the video film in question, is, precisely, on the processes of transcultural and transnational identity negotiations articulated by it. Set and shot in two neighbouring West African states of Nigeria and Republic of Benin respectively, *Abeni* focuses on the domestic crises of a set of urban – based upper – class families whose filial and 'affiliative' connections transgress the borders and boundaries of the two countries. Brought up under a condition of great affluence, *Abeni*, the eponymous heroine of the film falls in love with Akanni, the son of a Beninoise who guards her father's

house in Lagos. With her parents opposed to the relationship, Abeni elopes with her lover and the two re-settle in Benin Republic to start a new life.

Beside the couple, several other characters in this highly fascinating film are also constantly on the move, constantly crossing and re-crossing the borders of the two countries, plotting and re-plotting their routes, migrating, connecting and re-connecting. It is my plan in this paper then to lay bare the perspective of territorialisation and de-territorialisation, transculturation and identity re-placement which the film articulates.

### **Susanne Reichl (U Vienna)**

#### **Races, faces, colours: Translocating racism in Black British literature for young readers**

While a number of Black British books for children and teenagers treat racism and the challenges of living as a 'young other' in an unfriendly environment in a very realistic way, there are also examples of a less realistic construction of race and ethnicity, and they will be the focus of my paper.

The most prominent example is Malorie Blackman's bestselling *Noughts and Crosses* tetralogy, which turns the black and white world we know upside down. Other examples come from Benjamin Zephaniah and Jackie Kay, who have written about children whose faces stand out as different and who experience a sense of unbelonging and discrimination because of it. Face and race, the analogy suggests itself, are both markers of visible difference, markers of identity and identification. Therefore, do Kay and Zephaniah speak metaphorically about race when they speak of a disfigured face? And when a poet like Grace Nichols writes a poem about a family of different colours in a book on painting and art, are her young readers meant to understand the poem as a comment on a multicultural society?

How are young readers meant to understand race, racial identity, and racism in these texts? Why does literature for children and young adults seem to be an ideal location to challenge realistic expectations about racism? And can young readers understand such a translocation and read 'face' as 'race'? In my paper, I will try to provide answers to some of these questions and discuss how such an enquiry throws light on the debates about critical terms such as race and ethnicity.

#### References:

- Blackman, Malorie. *Noughts & Crosses*. London: Doubleday, 2001.
- , *Knife Edge*. London: Doubleday, 2004.
- , *Checkmate*. London: Doubleday, 2005.
- , *Double Cross*. London: Doubleday, 2008.
- Kay, Jackie. "My face is a map." *Red, Cherry Red*. London: Bloomsbury, 2007.
- Nichols, Grace. "Colour Reunion." *Paint me a poem*. London: A&C Black, 2004.
- Zephaniah, Benjamin. *Face*. London: Bloomsbury, 1999.

### **Katharina Rennhak (LMU Munich)**

#### **Daljit Nagra's *Look We Have Coming to Dover!* and the limits of the translocal**

In his article 'Black British Poetry and the Translocal' Jahan Ramazani draws on Stuart Hall's notion of 'diaspora identities' in order to describe the poetry of 20<sup>th</sup>-century and contemporary black British poets. Their poems are defined, Ramazani writes (quoting Hall), "by the recognition of a necessary

heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of "identity" which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by *hybridity*." According to Ramazani it is this *hybridity* which makes black British poems 'translocal', in that they see [London and other British places] afresh [...and], shuttle across and unsettle imperial hierarchies of centre and periphery [...]. In short, they dislocate the local into translocation.'

In my paper I will take Ramazani's (in my opinion ultimately unconvincing) mixture of theoretical terms and concepts as a springboard for an analysis of Daljit Nagra's lyrical explorations of concrete and abstract, topographical and fictive locations in his acclaimed debut collection *Look We Have Coming to Dover!* (2007). Nagra's poetry certainly partakes of the 'foreignizing dynamics' characteristic of all 'terms in the [postcolonial] field with the prefix "trans-" (Döring). My analysis will also show, however, (1) that his poems problematize the yearning for a liberating translocality; and (2) how they anchor their speakers' hybrid identities as well as the differentiating dynamics which they imagine and initiate in clearly delineated (lyrical and/or topographical) localities. According to the logic that unfolds in *Look We Have Coming to Dover!* 'the fact or quality of having a place, that is, of having position in space' (= 'locality'; *OED*) is indispensable for the renegotiation of cultural identities in a multicultural society. The result of my reading of Nagra's poetry will, finally, lead me back to my reflections on the theoretical concept and term of 'the translocal'.

Döring, Tobias. 2008. *Postcolonial Literatures in English*. Stuttgart: Klett.

Hall, Stuart. 1990. "Cultural Identity and Diaspora". *Identity, Community, Culture, Difference*. Ed. Jonathan Rutherford. London: Lawrence and Wishart.

Ramazani, Jahan. 2007. "Black British Poetry and the Translocal". *Cambridge Companion to Twentieth-Century English Poetry*. Ed. Neil Corcoran. Cambridge: CUP."

## **Gundo Rial y Costas (FU Berlin)**

### **Translating the American Dream? A Brazilian vision of the promised land**

Emanating from the historic reality of Brazil, which had been described since the arrival of the first Portuguese colonizers in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century as 'paradise' and 'promised land', the following presentation shall refer to the successful telenovela *América* (Gloria Pérez, 2005), which questions and shifts established categories of homeland and nation-state.

Reflecting real processes of emigration, this audiovisual narrative is about a young Brazilian woman who leaves her beloved boyfriend in order to pursue her happiness in the USA after border-crossing the Mexican-American border. The narrative reconstruction and the sources, which the author used will be reconstructed in the following. That will imply the way in which elements of the American Dream (such as the pursuit of happiness and the attempt to realize one's dreams) are dislocated and incorporated into the (audiovisual) narrative and thus result in a new 'dream narrative', a Brazilian American dream. Hereby I will draw on ethnographic sources, as Pérez did narrative interviews with migrants at the border. And I will further refer to the construction of the characters as some of them are based on a publication by an oral historicist, who himself had done several hundred interviews with Brazilians living in the USA.

My approach will be embedded within a frame that considers Brazil's specific indebtedness to the format of the Telenovela, the melodrama, and the dynamic nature of this medium.

### **Miriam Richter (U Kiel)**

#### **Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness vs. peace, order, and good government: The exodus of the United Empire Loyalists**

Much has been written about literary portrayals of relocations into entirely different cultural environments. Large-scale migration into comparable surroundings, however, has rather been neglected, especially in the study of children's literature.

Hence, this paper sets out to shed some light on the exodus of United Empire Loyalists as represented in selected works of Canadian youth fiction. As historical fiction constitutes a powerful tool in the creation of a community's collective memory, the literary portrayal of this migration can be expected to provide valuable insights into Canada's auto-image in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, all the more as the relationship between Canada and her southern neighbour has always been at the core of this auto-image and the Loyalists have long played the role of founding fathers in the Canadian national narrative.

For this purpose, the works under examination have been chosen to cover a time range of two-and-a-half decades in order to sketch a possible development. The starting point will be John F. Hayes' *On Loyalist Trails* (1971), followed by Mary Beacock Fryer's *Escape: Adventures of a Loyalist Family* (1976) and Janet Lunn's *The Hollow Tree* (1997). The approach will be an interdisciplinary one, which combines both literary theory and concepts of history and nation-building. Drawing on this framework, I will work out the characterization of Yankees and Loyalist refugees from the young United States, including the hardships the latter encounter during their migration, and the Canadian reception of the newcomers in these novels. One aim will be to demonstrate how Canada disassociates herself from her neighbour through literature, thus illustrating the construction of a country's national identity against an external 'Other'. The boom of Canadian juvenile literature on Loyalist refugees in the 1970s reflects its topicality at the time as well as the significance of literature as both an indicator of a society's status quo and as a tool to shape it. In addition to the U.S.-Canadian relations, special emphasis will be laid on the convictions and values the authors present as central to the Canadian national fabric.

### **Ksenia Robbe (U Giessen)**

#### **Transpositionings: Chronotopes of decolonization in Zoë Wicomb's *You Can't Get Lost in Cape Town* and Njabulo S. Ndebele's *Fools and Other Stories***

The short story cycles of Zoë Wicomb and Njabulo S. Ndebele – produced in the 1980s and generally regarded as landmarks of South African literature – have usually been read as narratives of emancipation of a male/female subject with the focus on the 'ordinary' lives of black/coloured South African communities. While often examined along with the authors' critical texts, those works have seldom been considered in relation to each other. I would suggest that they can be productively compared against the



background of negotiating the generic conventions of short story and *Bildungsroman* and questioning the temporalities and spatial imageries dominating the 1980s South African fiction. Together with Wicomb's and Ndebele's critical essays, those fictional narratives might be seen as participating in postcolonial revisions of Western chronotopical structures and classifications. They do so particularly by employing narrative strategies which do not fit in the notions of 'realist', 'modernist' or 'postmodernist'. Instead of employing those terms, they could rather be read as processes of 'transpositioning' – a shifting between the contexts of various communities and practices of a subject conscious of its positionalities. A reading of Ndebele's and Wicomb's text from this perspective would involve the positions of 'home' and 'exile', 'art' and 'politics'. Besides those general contexts, I would like to focus on the family relations as one of the central themes in both works in order to examine the particular positions assumed by the biographical narrators in relation to their 'others' who are part of their family or community.

### Genre

The importance of genre theory (revised) for postcolonial studies: ...the policing of the borders of genre tells us something about the logic of power and the political arena in which postcoloniality strives to articulate difference; that is, genre too is subject to decolonization. (Hitchcock, 301) + the connection between the utterance and the social

Postcoloniality (and postcolonial writing) aims at not simply a mixture of genres, not offering yet another 'truth', but a conscious undermining of the whole generic classification as such (the position of outsideness):

...[the genre of postcoloniality's] generic distinction is to question genre, not just as a fulfilment of the law of genre, but as a means to dissolve the very classifications and divisions that have produced it. For these are 'neither unconventionally true nor unqualifiedly certain.' (326)

### **Verena Rodatus (U Bremen)**

#### **The biennial DAK'ART as translocal exhibition of 'Contemporary African art'**

The biennial DAK'ART in Senegal is a 'platform of visibility' for contemporary artists in/from Africa and its diaspora – with the overarching aim to (critically) intervene into the international art world. Understanding an exhibition as a representational system, I interrogate how the curators of the DAK'ART biennial define 'contemporary African art'. From a perspective combining visual culture with postcolonial and gender studies, I am particularly interested on how the biennial is staged as a translocal exhibition of variously connected geographic and temporal spaces.

If an artist from the African continent is only acknowledged in the international art scene on the basis that s/he represents his or her supposed culture(s), the dominant discourse treats his/her artistic creativity in a manner that differs from the white, male, western 'innovative and original' artist. Therefore, I approach mechanisms of in-/exclusion: I assume that the attribution of cultural authenticity is to be considered as

the main indicator of marginalization. Cultural authenticity is often articulated alongside geographic designations connoted by gender and , 'race'.

Hence, I ask how space syntax, perimetry – i.e. thresholds, edges and contrasts – and in/visibility in the exhibition function as a system of representation. How do they (de)construct (trans-) cultural representations of gender in/of a so called 'Africanity'? What is hereby the importance of national identity, origin and migration for a definition of 'contemporary African art'?

**Carla Rodríguez González (U Oviedo)**

### **Leila Aboulela's urban cartographies**

The aim of this paper is to focus on the representation of diasporic urban spaces in Leila Aboulela's novels *The Translator* (1999) and *Minaret* (2005), as well as two short stories included in her collection *Coloured Lights* (2001): 'Visitors' and 'The Boy from the Kebab Shop'. It will be analysed how these texts map British cities (London and Aberdeen) and also African ones (Khartoum), questioning unproblematic representations of international urban connections in our globalised age. This paper will study how Aboulela's fiction problematizes multicultural representations of cities and how it highlights the experience of segregated spaces by migrant subjects. It will use Manuel Castells' description of contemporary cities as interconnected 'urban nodes' that both connect and marginalise people in similar ways throughout the world, denying them the right to partake in the city on equal terms. Urban translocation will be studied from a gendered perspective and connected to religious difference.

**J. Coplen Rose (BU Quebec)**

### **Al Purdy's cultural translation of Athol Fugard's *Sizwe Bansi is Dead***

There are two different works entitled 'Sizwe Bansi is Dead.' One version is a South African play written by Athol Fugard, John Kani and Winston Ntshona (created in 1971, first published in 1974), and the other is a poem written by Canadian poet Al Purdy (1973). Purdy's poem displaces the original text by redefining Fugard's *Sizwe Bansi is Dead*.

As Purdy responds to the play, he culturally translates the resistance work using terms and concepts that are more familiar to a Canadian audience. Purdy redefines Fugard's original emphasis by directing his audiences' focus away from issues of racial inequality. Purdy accomplishes this by employing Marxist characters and rhetoric throughout his response.

Purdy's poem introduces figures such as Mao Zedong and Che Guevara, which create a connection between the play's resistance to apartheid within South Africa and socialist revolts internationally. By evoking iconic communist leaders Purdy deflates Fugard's emphasis on racial divide while encouraging the poem's audience to view the play as part of a global class struggle. By replacing racial struggle with class struggle Purdy creates a text that is completely accessible to an audience unfamiliar with details of South Africa's apartheid system. As Fredric Jameson points out, all Marxist narratives 'are retold within the unity of a single collective story...the collective struggle to wrest a realm of Freedom from a realm of

Necessity' (Jameson 19). In this instance, Purdy's emphasis on labour issues in South African factories transforms the story of Sizwe Bansi into a poem that uses Marxism to bridge the social and cultural distance between South Africa and North America.

Purdy's frame of reference alters our understanding and appreciation of the resistance play. Fanon illustrates the power that White individuals such as Purdy have over Western society's understanding of race as Fanon recounts: it was 'the white man, who had woven me out of a thousand details, anecdotes, stories' (111). In this instance Purdy 'weaves' yet another story by downplaying racial injustice as his poem minimizes and replaces Fugard's emphasis on racial segregation with a text, which speaks to Purdy's own aesthetic interests.

#### Works Cited

Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Trans. Charles Lam Markmann. New York, New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1967.  
Jameson, Fredric. *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1981.

### **Ingrid von Rosenberg (U Dresden)**

#### **Representations of the (British) city in contemporary black and Asian British visual art**

The majority of Britain's 'visible minorities' with a migrant background have – for the obvious reason of job opportunities – settled in urban environments, especially in London and cities of the Midlands. Small wonder that the city (here used as generic term) plays a constitutive part in the many novels and films produced by black and Asian British authors and filmmakers since the 1960s. Surprisingly, in the visual arts the situation seems somewhat different. Images figuring city spaces and buildings are comparatively rare, though this does not mean that life in the city is not thematized. Instead of concentrating on city spaces, artists prefer to present city dwellers, some even without any visible built surroundings. The remarkable scarcity of street vistas may have something to do with a general mistrust in the suitability of the documentary mode to represent the essence of reality, which has spread from the 1980s on. Some artists have nevertheless continued in the documentary vein, like Rehan Jamil and Jagtar Semplay, who both present unstaged scenes from Muslim life in London's East End, but the majority obviously construct their images, most of which are still photographic works. Certain groups of people are given special attention: young male Bangladeshis (Rehan Jamil, Anthony Lam) or blacks (Faisal Abdu' Allah), homosexuals (Sunil Gupta) and women (Joy Gregory, Eileen Perrier). The artists' motivations vary from social criticism of racial exclusion (Jamil, Semplay) to ironic self-assurance (Abdu' Allah), playful hope in the powers of integration (Gregory, Perrier, Sonia Boyce) and the wish for peace between the Muslim community and the British majority (Mohammed Ali alias Aerosol Arabic). A few artists even aim at a more encompassing and fundamental political perspective, among them Keith Piper and Hew Locke. The latter expresses his criticism of British power politics in past and present by photographs of fancifully redressed monuments of famous politicians (Cromwell, Churchill) or huge object heads of members of the royal family made from tinsel and cheap toys in a voodoo-esque manner.

In my paper I would try to give an overview of representations of the city in black and Asian British art, paying attention to both the chosen media and the concerns of individual artists.

**Katherine E. Russo (U Naples)**

### **Practices of translocation: Appropriation in the Australian contact zone**

The aim of this paper is to explore the extent to which Indigenous Australian appropriation practices provide a space of cultural transformation or translocation. In Australia, the debate on appropriation has focussed on the issue of 'authenticity' ranging from an essentialist view of appropriation as a process of cultural contamination to the recent multicultural celebration of a neutral, transparent, cross-cultural exchange, which is open to all. Today, for instance, Australian hegemonies have extended property interests into rights to use Indigenous cultures in order to represent themselves as a multicultural nation or in the tourist industry. Consequently, Indigenous artists and writers have responded by extending the debate on appropriation to commodity culture, intellectual copyright, editorial and artistic relations. This paper proposes a study of practices of appropriation as practices of cultural transformation or translocation, the result of intercultural interaction among writers, artists, curators, editors, consumers etc. The abstract space of studies of appropriation is translated into a situated, experiential and sensory space in which writers, readers, editors, reviewers and critics are engaged and mutually influenced in their responses. Above all, this paper extends the analysis of practices of appropriation to editorial and curatorial practices, radically reassessing previous approaches to the study of appropriation by considering the intercultural space that underlies the creation of literary and visual texts.

**Sanjoy Saksena (U Allahabad)**

### **Relevance of Mahatma Gandhi in an age of globalization**

Mahatma Gandhi has been considered the epitome of nativism in India because of his leadership in the anti-colonial struggle against Britain and imperialism. There is no doubt that the back-bone of his thought lay in Indian philosophy, especially the Bhagwada Gita. Today, those of them who stand up for struggle against globalization use him as a bulwark forgetting that he dreamt of one world. Gandhi's thought had as much basis in the east as it did in the west, that his political ideas evolved as a consequence of his readings of Tolstoy, Ruskin, Max Muller, the Theosophists and the Bible. Much of these readings occurred during Gandhi's prolonged stints in Britain and South Africa or periods of translocation as well as dislocation. His experiences in these societies had a lot to do with the formation of his political strategy for the emancipation of the down-trodden. It is the international nature of Gandhian thought that has made him more relevant than ever and the deployment of his ideas in liberation struggles in Africa, Asia and the Civil Rights movement in the U.S.A. proves its vitality. In pursuit of nationalism we forget that often in nativist thought western ideas have been absorbed osmotically and naturalized to such an extent that we do not recognize them. The nativist anxiety to prove

itself independent of modern thought that has emerged from the west is ill-conceived for the nativist intellectual cannot generate ideas all by himself ignoring global thought.

**Kirsten Sandrock (U Göttingen)**

**Postcolonial piecework: Aspects of self-location in Madeleine Thien's *Certainty* and Jhumpa Lahiri's *Unaccustomed Earth***

The ambivalent search for a stable, yet multiple sense of self is a prevalent marker of postcolonial literature, which finds itself poised between the desire for truth about one's roots and the simultaneous knowledge that such a truth is bound to remain a romanticized, nostalgic simulacrum. This paper explores these ambivalences of today's post-postmodern society by looking at the works of Madeleine Thien and Jhumpa Lahiri. Both authors explore the tension between the politically correct celebration of the multicultural self and the innate desire for personal and cultural certainty, which leaves many of their protagonists to desperate for information about their own and other people's history. Starting with an analysis of Thien's novel *Certainty* (2007), I will argue that the motifs of travelling and exploration point towards an inherent longing for knowing the 'truth', just as motifs of photography and archaeological research in Lahiri's latest short story collection *Unaccustomed Earth* (2008) reveal a yearning for retrieving the past in an impossible manner, where the past is not always but frequently the kind of foreign country David Lowenthal coined it to be. In the end, it will be shown that the tension between multiplicity and individuality as well as the tension between plurality and uniqueness is part and parcel of a wider post-postmodern sensibility that seeks to locate the self in a globalized and itinerant world at the same time as it refuses to be situated in any kind of definite, unambiguous paradigm.

**Katja Sarkowsky (U Augsburg)**

**No returns: Narrative constructions of translocal space in James Welch's *Heartsong* and Lawrence Hill's *The Book of Negroes/Someone Knows My Name***

Issues of migration and diaspora have been central to the field of postcolonial and transcultural studies, and have increasingly proven to be paradigmatic for the discussion of transnational and global cultural processes. Fundamental reconceptualisations of 'space' and 'place' are central to these debates (Löw 2000), and also have significant bearings upon questions of citizenship, concepts of self, and belonging in a world of transnational movements (Ong 1999). As the narrator of Lawrence Hill's recent novel *The Book of Negroes/Someone Knows my Name* (2007), Aminata Diallo, points out: 'In South Carolina, I had been an African. In Nova Scotia, I had become known as a Loyalist, or a Negro, or both. And now, finally back in Africa, I was seen as a Nova Scotian, and in some respects thought of myself that way, too' (Hill 2007, 385). These different identifications are as closely tied to locations as they are to social position. The movements back and forth across the Atlantic narrated in the novel do not simply connect different places; rather, these connections create dynamic translocal spaces, which, in turn, change places as well as national and other community histories.

In this paper, I want to look at the way in which recent novels narratively construct spaces that encompass and transcend places of origin, arrival, or transition – all of them provisional and precarious –, and how these constructions impact the novels' negotiations of individual selves, of community, of history, and a form of agency I would like to refer to as 'citizenship' (Quaestio 2000). In addition to the above mentioned *Book of Negroes*, a novel clearly in line with other critical rewritings of the 'Black Atlantic' (Gilroy 1993), I will discuss Blackfoot author James Welch's *Heartsong* (2000). Despite their very different styles and cultural agendas, the two novels share an interest in the close link between constructions of translocal space, stories of displaced individual lives, and issues of cultural citizenship (Benhabib 2002, 2004; Stevenson 2003) as a way to critically assess historical as well as present social structures.

#### References

- Benhabib, Seyla. *The Rights of Others. Aliens, Residents, and Citizens*. Cambridge: CUP, 2004.
- . *The Claims of Culture. Equality and Diversity in the Global Era*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2002.
- Gilroy, Paul. *The Black Atlantic. Modernity and Double Consciousness*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1993.
- Hill, Lawrence. *Someone Knows My Name*. New York: Norton, 2007.
- Löw, Martina. *Raumsoziologie*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2000.
- Ong, Aihwa. *Flexible Citizenship. The Cultural Logics of Transnationality*. Durham: Duke UP, 1999.
- Quaestio. "Sexuelle Politiken. Politische Rechte und gesellschaftliche Teilhabe," *Queering Demokratie. Sexuelle Politiken*. Hg. Nico Beger, Sabine Hark et al. Berlin: Querverlag, 2000. 9-27.
- Stevenson, Nick. *Cultural Citizenship. Cosmopolitan Questions*. Maidenhead: Open UP, 2003.
- Welch, James. *Heartsong*. Edinburgh: Canongate, 2001 [2000].

#### **Kim Sasser (U Edinburgh)**

##### **Rushdie's universalist turn in *The Enchantress of Florence***

'This may be the curse of the human race, [...] not that we are so different from one another, but that we are so alike,' or so believe two cosmopolitan characters in Salman Rushdie's recent novel, *The Enchantress of Florence* (2008). This statement is significant not only within the narrative, but also within Rushdie's oeuvre, for it underscores the new universalist turn Rushdie has taken, one which deviates drastically from his previous ideas about identity.

*The Enchantress's* universalism marks a shift in the way Rushdie has confronted purisms in the past, with hybridity. Now, in order to counter territorial ideologies, particularly that which contributes to the East/West divide, this novel contends that all people across time and space share a single universal community. The passport into this community, so to speak, is our flawed human nature. With this universalism Rushdie also alters his stance towards culture. Previously, he evinced value for culture as the avenue through which newness enters the world; his universalist turn, however, presents traditional ties as bonds from which one must escape. Because it was Rushdie's championing of hybridity that led various theorists to see him as epitomizing cosmopolitanism, *The Enchantress's* reimagined community occasions a new evaluation of his status as a cosmopolitan figure.

**Christian Schmitt-Kilb (U Frankfurt/M)**

**Home is synonymous with the writer's block: Travelling, writing and collecting in the work of Bruce Chatwin**

In life and text, Bruce Chatwin was as much concerned with travelling as with collecting, two activities which, in the history of colonialism, are regular companions – and two activities which seem to exclude each other as the traveller on the move cannot burden him- or herself with too many objects of desire. Words weigh less than things, though, and this may be the reason why for Chatwin's prose style as well as for his characters, collections, lists and catalogues (of humans as well as things) play a central role. For Chatwin, their peculiarity lies in their being placed, displaced, 'translocated' (into collections or museums, into Patagonia, Prague or Australia) and turned, one might argue, into what Michel Foucault has called 'heterotopias'. – In the postcolonial context, the spectrum of judgement on Chatwin is wide. He is accused of ethnographic neocolonialism generically continuous with the imperial gaze on the one hand while being praised as *the* writer of an anti-genealogical, anti-hierarchical, rhizomatic space of postcoloniality on the other. Taking into account Chatwin's idiosyncratic overlappings of travelling, collecting and writing, I would like to suggest a reading which escapes these extremes by addressing a number of questions: At which points does Chatwin fall into colonial-imperial patterns of travel writing? What does he do with and to them? And where and how does he transgress the traditional discourse of travel writing to open up new ways for a curiosity without the will to appropriation?

**Markus Schmitz (U Münster)**

**Cultural articulations of Arab American crossovers**

More than most other sectors in the globalized culture industry, articulations by Arab American writers, artists and critics are capable of undermining the Orientalist-Occidental matrix of ethnicity and cultural identity. At the same time, these articulations are contingent upon precisely those relations of power and conflict which are all too often passed over by theoretical debates dominating Postcolonial and Cultural Studies.

This paper focuses on selected works of such diverse contemporary intellectuals like the academic anarcho-blogger As'ad AbuKhalil (*The Angry Arab News Service*, [www.angryarab.blogspot.com](http://www.angryarab.blogspot.com) (2003)], the writer Rabieh Alameddine [*Koolaid's* (1998), *I, The Divine* (2001); *The Hakawati* (2008) and the conceptual performance artist Walid Raad [*The Atlas Group Project*, [www.theatlasgroup.org](http://www.theatlasgroup.org) (1999-)].

These works are decisively influenced in a variety of ways by the continuous physical and discursive transit movements of their authors who shuttle back and forth between worlds. Thus my exploration of different conditions of production and receptions also switches between what we have become accustomed to call the Arab-Islamic world and the American West. By approaching both artistic-literary and theoretical-critical articulations of Arab American intellectuals as acts producing symbolic meaning

with direct worldly referentiality, I aim at exploring the material conditions of possibility/impossibility and the recursive effects of these articulations on the concrete poles of cross-cultural translations.

Utilizing the provisional paradigm of transmigration to grasp the cultural dynamics of Middle Eastern-American crossovers I intend to exemplarily open up the conventional explanatory models and analytical categories of postcolonial migration and Diaspora studies to the formation of transmigratory spaces of cultural de-centring: artistic-media spheres of resistive performance, literary non-places of narrative identifications and virtual net spaces of criticism.

How are economic experiences, political conflicts or military scenarios abstracted in criticism? How are these realities converted into literary or historical metaphors? How is the act of cultural translation configured into works of visual art in this context? What kind of relation bear the critics, authors and artists to their cultural archives and institutional histories? For which audience do they bring forward an argument, narrate a story, or create an image? Is the production process just as linear as the process of representation? How do these works alter in the act of representation itself when they voyage across the historically created divide between nations and cultures?

**Nicole Schröder (U Paderborn)**

**A pirate's life for me: Empire, otherness and spatial boundaries in *Pirates of the Caribbean***

Disney's 2003 box office hit *Pirates of the Caribbean* (Dir. Gore Verbinski) as well as its two sequels revive the traditional action-adventure genre with a few timely updates combining historical elements with the fantastic. Set in the Caribbean, the film seems to follow the usual plot of 'good' against 'evil' featuring fights, rescues, treachery, and courage. At the same time, however, Hollywood's usually reliable categories of good and evil become blurred as characters change sides and follow their own secret and opportunistic motivations, which seem to change frequently.

This paper investigates the film's treatment of 'otherness' and the various forms it takes, arguing that it is a slippery category as the film both questions the exclusion of (white) otherness as well as reinforces the exclusion of certain types of (non-white) otherness. Moreover, the paper will look at the various film spaces, mostly seascapes and islands, with regard to their relation to otherness and show how the Caribbean sea emerges as a (trans-) location where various cultural, ideological, and social spaces meet and grapple with each other.

**Silvia Schiltermandl (U Graz)**

**Imaginary homelands and imagined communities: Origin and return in Vineeta Vijayaraghavan's *Motherland***

How does community function in a transnational era? In pursuit of answers to this question, this paper explores the construction and negotiation of national and transnational communities in Vineeta Vijayaraghavan's novel *Motherland* (2001). While the above question is nothing new, the novel, which has not received any critical attention thus far, offers some interesting aspects to theorize community in



contemporary diasporic and transnational Indian American communities. For instance, while India grapples with the recent assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, Maya, the novel's main protagonist, struggles to make sense of her 'imaginary homelands, Indias of the mind' (Rushdie) and the dialogue between traditional and modern elements in contemporary Indian culture. I am most interested in Maya's negotiation of her identity, her experience of diaspora and return, and the related negotiation of her role as a daughter and granddaughter at a time of an increased attenuation to national discourses and ongoing globalization. I am concerned with the question of how gender and national imaginary communities can reconcile nationalism and globalization in an era of hyper-mobility and the interconnectedness of Indian and Indian American communities, an era in which, as Maya suggests 'Everyone has an American niece these days.'

**Caio Simões de Araújo (U Coimbra)**

### **Tales of international madness: Is there a post-colonialist theory for international relations?**

In the last decades, the interest in postcolonial studies and all the complex questions it brings to discussion has deeply increased. More than this, Post-colonialism, an approach that was born and was initially limited to the fields of Cultural and Literary Studies, has crossed its own borders and reached others areas, mainly in Social and Political Sciences. At the same time, the economic and cultural globalization created the conditions for the emergence of the 'International' as a field of study. The International Relations Theories (IRT), initially focused on the Nation-state and limited to a liberal or realist approach, have passed for an enlargement process in consequence of the increasing complexity of its own theoretical object. In fact, from 60s so on, several theories were gradually incorporated to International Relations theoretical body, creating a deep debate among some themes as globalization and international dynamics. Nevertheless, the Post-Colonial theory continues to be systematically ignored by scholars as a valid approach of the international system. In this paper, we consider that Post-Colonialism must be integrated to International Relations Theory because of its critical potential and its capacity of interpreting issues historically marginalized by the traditional theories.

**Roy Sommer (U Wuppertal)**

### **No size fits all: Postcolonial ways of seeing in the 21st century**

As an umbrella term, 'translocation' accounts for the heterogeneity and mobility of postcolonial cultural production as well as for the critical engagement with the dynamic, processual and hybrid nature of postcolonial arts, aesthetics, and politics. From epistemological, ethical and political perspectives, however, 'translocation' is also symptomatic of the growing tensions within postcolonial discourse, which increasingly challenge the postcolonial paradigm as it has developed since Said's critique of Orientalism.

The ongoing protest within francophone and Lusophone postcolonial studies against the geographical and linguistic bias of postcolonial studies and the 'one-size-fits-all fashion' (Hargreaves/Murphy) of theoretical modelling in anglophone literature departments is a case in point. Similarly, critics from those

states which only recently gained independence from an imperialist regime, i.e. the post-Soviet states in the Baltic, the East and South East of Europe and the Caucasian region, demand that postcolonial studies should not ignore the emergence of new centres and margins in favour of theoretical coherence. Finally, the expansionist politics of the United States and their allies in countries such as Pakistan or Iraq, which were formerly subject to European imperialism, beg the question when (rather than whether) the 'post' in 'post'-colonial will be re-examined fundamentally.

The proposed paper adopts the notion of 'ways of seeing', developed by John Berger in 1972 as an intuitive epistemological approach to art, in order to avoid the theoretical preconceptions commonly associated with established concepts such as 'perspectivity', 'discourse', 'cultural relativism' or 'intercultural understanding'. Although the key issues addressed in the paper – postcolonial misunderstandings, misreadings, ignorance and chauvinism – may be equally relevant to sociological and political approaches within postcolonial studies, the focus will be on the implications of translocal postcolonial epistemology and translocal postcolonial ethics for literary and cultural theory: How can theory respond to heterogeneous, sometimes conflicting, interests and needs (manifest in postcolonial literature as well as in readings of colonial and postcolonial cultural products and processes) without denying otherness (a danger inherent in intercultural hermeneutics) or resorting to antagonistic positions (as outlined by Huntington)? The paper argues that a dialogic, 'travelling' kind of epistemology is required to come to terms with the 'translocal' postcolonial condition: no size fits all.

**Ann Spangenberg (U Kiel)**

### **Translocation in Larissa Lai's *Salt Fish Girl***

'Translocation' as a concept which can leave open points of departure and destination in more than a strictly geographical sense characterizes Larissa Lai's *Salt Fish Girl* exceedingly well. In Lai's novel, there is no sense of fixed points of departure and clear destinations. The characters cannot invest the places they come from or go to with reliable, comprehensive meaning. They keep moving from place to place without being able to reach a fixed goal and cannot establish a more than rudimentary sense of context, be it historical, political or geographical.

Translocation on the geographical level is a central element of the novel, in the form of migration, the defamiliarisation of familiar spaces and the removal of crucial aspects of life to the cyberspace. In a very concrete sense, the soil itself – a potent symbol of the 'rootedness' in a specific time and place – deprives the characters of just this: It spreads the 'Dreaming Disease', the carriers of which go mad because they are overwhelmed by innumerable historical memories not connected to a specific location. Another important aspect of Lai's novel consists in the translocation of the human species from its accustomed place, as human DNA is mixed with animal genes and the ways of reproduction multiply (cloning, experiments with genetic engineering which got out of control). Finally, *Salt Fish Girl* furthers a

sense of translocation by mixing realism with allegory, myths and fairy tales, in this process fusing elements taken from different cultures.

### **David Stoop (U Cologne)**

#### **Intercultural transformations of the city: Mosque-projects in Germany and the symbolic space**

For a long period, mosques have been located predominantly in former fabric halls or 'backyards'. But in recent years more and more Muslim associations initiated representative mosque-projects, which are highly contested in German public. Most often, the debates do not concentrate on the question whether a mosque should be built or not, but rather on the mode of the building. High minarets and domes are frequently interpreted as visual signs of Islam and its alleged claim to power. Understandable provisos of local residents against a mosque in their neighbourhood and expected traffic problems intertwine with racist prejudices against a supposedly atavistic Islam. In the course of these discussions, Islam is often presented as a monolithic, hostile entity and mosques are depicted as architectural symbols of power in a 'clash of civilizations'. Drawing from the example of the recent mosque debate in Cologne and its media coverage, it will be shown how mosque-conflicts are overloaded with cultural and religious interpretations and closely linked to common pictures of 'the' Muslims. In a further step, it will be analysed in how far mosques can be interpreted as visual heterotopias that disturb the symbolic space of a city and lead to an 'intercultural transformation of space' that can be described as an integration process on a symbolic level.

### **Silke Stroh (U Münster)**

#### **Theories and practices of transmigration: Translocation and colonial British diasporas**

Transmigration is a highly relevant aspect of the development (e.g. through cross-border, diasporic and hybrid practices) of transcultural social spaces and new kinds of *trans*-locations where notions of neat boundaries become impossible, and where geographical or cultural distances are bridged and eluded by the compression of disparate but connected geographies into shared hybrid spaces. This paper surveys different ways in which the concept of transmigration has been developed and used in the Social Sciences, and discusses in how far it can be fruitfully applied in postcolonial and transcultural English Studies. It also offers a more detailed exploration of the 'transmigration' concept in the particular sense of '*multiple* migration' where people physically relocate to other countries, or even continents, more than once. Some forms of multiple migration already occupy a prominent position in postcolonial and transcultural English Studies (e.g. concerning the 'Black Atlantic' or the South Asian diasporas), though they are rarely *labelled* as 'trans-migration' and not always theorised as a specific sub-category of migration and diaspora studies. This paper aims to explore some theoretical implications of such distinctions, e.g. concerning the relation between 'transmigration' discourses on the one hand and traditional concepts of diaspora and/or 'single' migrations on the other. Moreover, it extends the frame of reference from non-white diasporas to hitherto less frequently discussed case studies from the white

British colonial settler diaspora of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Primary sources include certain discourses produced by 19<sup>th</sup>-century transmigrants themselves, as well as texts written about them by others (incl. later, postcolonial sources from the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century, both fictional and non-fictional). It will be explored how the transmigrants are positioned in relation to their various old and new locations, to other populations encountered there, as well as to different local 'branches' of the 'same' transmigrant community. This will help to elucidate how these discourses construct identities and (un)belonging across geographical space, and discuss whether at least some discourses of colonial transmigration display features which can be regarded as predecessors of certain forms of reterritorialize identities and translocations, as well as forms of transnational, cosmopolitan or global consciousness, identified today.

### **Klaus Stuckert (Wetzikon)**

#### **Swiss-Caribbean authors?!**

Switzerland is not normally thought of in connection with colonialism, but recent historical research has shown that Swiss companies and individuals participated in all sectors of the transatlantic slave trade and the plantation economy. Even a literary scholar can show repercussions of this involvement.

I will call attention to four Caribbean writers: Guyanese author Edgar Mittelholzer 1909-65 (descending from a Swiss plantation manager), who came to Great Britain to advance his literary career even before Selvon, Lamming and Naipaul did, and who published twenty-five books in English; Cola Debrot 1902-81, doyen of Dutch literature in the Netherlands Antilles (people of his class had previously written in Spanish), who has a family tree going back to a Swiss soldier who had been 'commandeur' of Bonaire 1817-27 and the founder of a patrician island family. Johann Rudolf Lauffer (from Zofingen) was governor of Curaçao 1796-1800/1803 and a plantation owner. His descendant Pierre Lauffer 1920-81 became the national poet of his island in Papiamentu, lifting the creole language of the Afro-Antillean masses, to a literary level so far not attempted. Tip Marugg 1923-2006, one of the best-known writers of the Netherlands Antilles, descended from an Amsterdam-born surgeon, originally from Klosters, who arrived on Curaçao in 1804.

### **Ayse Tuba Demirel Sucu (U Istanbul)**

#### **Construction of diasporic identity: Survival and ambivalence in Caryl Phillips's *Higher Ground***

The concept of diaspora identity is not a new one; whenever peoples with cultural traditions, shared values, and racial and ethnic identities are scattered into new locations, there emerges a culture and new forms of identity bearing their traditions existing within the ongoing struggle to grapple with the dominant society. This essay will examine issues regarding diaspora and identity construction through Caryl Phillips's 1989 novel *Higher Ground*.

Caryl Phillips has re-invented 'blackness' within contemporary cultural production by drawing attention to the cultural hybridity of racial identities and their shifting, multiple boundaries. His novel represents postcolonial identity problems experienced by millions by discarding simply binaries and

creating a third diasporic space. Home is within the displaced person, and integrity comes from plurality and coherence of experience.

Paul Gilroy's emphasis in *The Black Atlantic* on double consciousness and Stuart Hall's essay *Cultural Identity and Diaspora* provide the point of departure for my analysis of Caryl Phillips's writing.

This paper closely examines the characters' construction of their identities in diaspora. It notes the changing nature of the diaspora in the three interwoven narratives and seeks to offer a context through which the issue of identity and diaspora relation can be understood.

**Rotimi Taiwo (U Freiburg)**

### **Language and cultural identity in the Nigerian online diaspora**

The first wave of Diasporic Nigerian communities was the pre-independence period when several Nigerian students in the Diaspora like H.O. Davies, Nnamdi Azikiwe, and Obafemi Awolowo struggled for decolonisation. In the last thirty years, several young Nigerians have migrated to Europe, America, Asia, and other parts of the world. This was due mainly to the prevailing economic situation in the country. Their goal was to seek better quality of life in these countries, which have more economic prospects. While residing outside the country, many of these Nigerian still keep abreast of happenings at home and feel obliged to contribute to discussions on national issues. The Internet provided a useful forum for them to fulfil this desire. It provides opportunities for immigrant Nigerians' to pursue questions of national identity, to promote politically engaged discussions of their homeland, and even to become politically active' (Oha, 2001).

The first move towards developing a virtual network of Nigerians in the Diaspora was in 1991. A Nigerian student at Dartmouth College, New Hampshire, USA started forwarding e-mails on Nigerian issues to selected friends. This network later developed to become a Usenet news group, which focused on news from Nigeria and discussions about social and political issues facing Nigerians both 'at home' and abroad (Bastian, 1999). However, now there are several Nigerian Online diasporic communities, monitoring regularly socio-political issues in the country and commenting on them in some form of Internet Discussion Forums. With this, the communication gap between the Nigerians at home and those in the Diaspora has been virtually erased (Eribo & Albada, 2002, Paden, 2008). It has been noted that Nigerian and other African diasporic communities have served as pressure groups mounting political pressure on dictatorial governments and corrupt leaders on the continent (Ojo, 2005: 168). *Nigerian Village Square* (NVS) is one of such forums established as a virtual 'village' to exchange information about the country, the communities in which Nigerians currently reside and the larger world around them. In addition, NVS gives access to the latest news culled from news portals and wire services, including links to major Nigerian and international newspapers.

This paper intends to examine discursive behaviour of Nigerian on this forum, which places a lot of emphasis on interchange of ideas and opinions. It will examine how this virtual 'village' provides an

avenue for Nigerians in the Diaspora to construct a community with collective cultural and social identity, regardless of their different ethnic backgrounds. My focus will be on a sub-forum of the Main Square, which features news, politics and current events in Nigeria and commentaries on them. In this sub-forum, I will examine the blend of some forms of standard and Nigerian domesticated varieties of English and how these are used to construct identities in the forum.

#### References

- Bastian, M. L. (1999) Nationalism in the Virtual Space, Immigrant Nigerians on the Internet. *West African Review* (1). Retrieved November 13, 2008 from: <http://www.westafricareview.com/vol1.1/bastian.html>
- Eribo, F. & Albada, K. F. (2002) Dynamics of Internet in Nigeria. In Robins, L. D. & Hilliard, R. L. (Eds.) *Beyond Boundaries: Cyberspace in Africa*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. 117-129.
- Ojo, T. (2005) ICTs and the Construction of "Imagined African Communities" Online. In Brigitte, Hipfl & Theo Hug (Eds.) *Media Communities*. 167-188. Münster: Waxmann Verlag.
- Oha, O. (2001) 'This is what they now call reality': Otherness and the rhetoric of the hyperreal. *Mots Pluriels*, 18. (Special issue on "The Net: New Apprentices and Old Masters", guest-edited by Mark Pegrum, Queen Margaret University College, Edinburgh). Retrieved on December 19, 2008 from: <http://motspluriels.arts.uwa.edu.au/MP1801oo.html>
- Paden, J. N. (2008) Faith and Politics in Nigeria: *Nigeria as a Pivotal State in the Muslim World*. John N. Paden. U.S. Institute of Peace Press.

### **Mubina Talaat (IIU Islamabad)**

#### **Crossing the sea: South Asian women's view on postcolonial translocations**

Rushdie believes that a dream connects us with the West – with England, with America and Europe – which may be, initially, a sheer fascination for the remote and distant 'other' – for youthful imagination (*Midnight's Children*, 1981). But, this dream intrudes upon reality – to take us far – and then leads us to question, both the 'self' and the 'other,' to redraw the boundaries between them. And the redrawing of cultural boundaries involves not only looking into economic and socio-political realities, but also the 'myths' about them – the fact and the fiction. The South Asian writers strive to 'connect' the two 'worlds' – East and West, the coloniser and the colonised, 'the self' and the 'other.' Rushdie confesses that he is constantly looking for a myth that will fit both spaces – East and West.

Kamila Shamsie takes up this theme in her new novel *Kartography*. Her female character insists on a connection between Pakistan and West. 'See: Pakistan connects to Iran which connects to Turkey which connects to Bulgaria which connects to France. But then there is the sea. And after that, England.' The male character responds, 'It does not quite connect, England.' The female character traces 'a sea route' with her finger from the 'coast of Karachi' to Plymouth, on a map: 'But we like seas' she says, 'If it were possible to walk on the sea bed, we could step into the water at Baleji Beach..... and we'd walk, walk, and walk....And then, look, all of a sudden, there's England...' and she is warned by the male character that even the sea has boundaries and venturing into other people's water may land her into trouble. (Kartography: 2002)

This argument represents many symbolic dimensions of the human efforts to reach out and connect with the 'other' – of finding 'transnational locations.' It says that this effort is massive, it invites us to cross the seas, and it knows that crossing is inevitable, but when we have crossed, the crossing stands to be questioned over its legitimization – and/or we might still find ourselves trapped at the other end. Of

tremendous consequence is the female voice insisting on – not just crossing, but also finding the connection.

In this paper, I examine the role of female writers and narrators in South Asian English fiction voicing their feelings, views, efforts and experiences of 'crossing' and the consequences for their lives. Because women are considered to be conservative, attached to the idea of 'homes,' their insistence on finding a connection between East and West calls for radical changes in the map of the world. The women writers I have chosen to work on are Kamila Shamsie (*Kartography*) and Sara Suleri Goodyear (*Meatless day, Boys Will Be Boys*). Both have crossed borders, have experienced pain of 'scattering over the world.' They live abroad while professing love for the country of their origin, Pakistan. Their voice is the voice of difference and change, from men. Both notice how disparate cultures shatter identities, but they also notice how new identities emerge from the old. Both writers present their views on the friction and fragmentation of cultural identities as well as fusions. The present paper attempts to interpret the underlying principles of these fusions and friction through a careful reading.

### **Kathy-Ann Tan (U Tübingen)**

#### **Curio(us) translocations: Site-specific interventions in Banglatown, London**

My paper deals with a collaborative intermedia art project titled 'curio' that ran for a period of four weeks in London during September-October 2002, exactly a year after the 9/11 attacks. The project, curated by Alana Jelinek, invited seven artists to respond with site-specific interventions into the nature of the tourist site known as 'Banglatown,' an area between Whitechapel and Spitalfields in London's East End. The different cultural backgrounds, perspectives and critical approaches of the seven artists (Jananne Al-Ani, Eamon O'Kane, Mohini Chandra, Michele Fuirer, Martin Parker, Erika Tan and Chila Burman) resulted in different manifestations of their critical engagements with notions of cultural tourism, stereotypes, authenticity, fantasies of the 'other', and terrorism. All seven art installations of 'curio' were located on Hanbury street which literally transects Brick Lane, the epicentre of 'Banglatown'. In my paper, I suggest that 'curio' effectively represented a project of temporal and spatial translocation – temporal because it was a time-specific event that situated the artists' (and viewers') critical responses against the backdrop of 9/11 (a year on), and spatial because, in the four weeks of this art installation, Hanbury street effectively became a site or space (in Henri Lefebvre's terms, a social construction), where the viewer was confronted with the diasporic culture being marketed and consumed. With the city at one end, and the local, mostly immigrant, Bangladeshi community at the other, Hanbury street also continues to mark translocation as a process, or in Jelinek's own words, 'a journey from global capitalism, its symbols and manifestations, through cultural tourism to the local (or vice versa, depending on your perspective)'. In my paper, I will focus on three of the visual art, soundscape recording and interactive media installations that made up 'curio' – Mohini Chandra's 'Flow', Eamon O'Kane's 'Stay, Sign Series and Fatherland' and Chila Burman's 'amoment2herself'.

**Nicole Weickgenannt Thiara (U Manchester)**

**The journey of ideas and (his)stories: Capturing the translocal in Salman Rushdie's *The Enchantress of Florence***

This paper will examine the representation of geographical and temporal translocations in Salman Rushdie's *The Enchantress of Florence* (2008). The term translocation implies shifting locations, multiple locations and, possibly, having no secure ground to stand on. In his latest novel, Rushdie plays with the idea of shifting locations, and even though the novel's title contains the name of a city, few things are firmly located in this novel. Set in sixteenth century Asia, Europe and America, the novel charts the travel and transformation of people and their stories, of ideas and cultural concepts. For example, Mogor, one of the central characters of *The Enchantress of Florence*, has a strong sense of having a family history, which provides him with a meaningful narrative of his own life, but he does not belong to a specific place. Machiavelli's Florence and Akbar's Fatehpur Sikri are privileged places in the novel but there are many other significant locations that shape the narrative of the text. I am particularly interested in exploring the ways in which the novel's various locations are represented as mutually constitutive and connected.

**Petra Tournay-Theodotou (U Cyprus)**

**'I love Cyprus but England is my home': Eve Makis's *Eat Drink and Be Married***

In her first novel *Eat, Drink and Be Married* (2004), Eve Makis explores the lives and mores of an Anglo-Cypriot family in Nottingham at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In many respects this is a typical coming-of-age novel told from the perspective of a young Greek-Cypriot woman caught in between two cultures, 'the one that raised me and the one that I grew up in' and can thus be read alongside first novels such as *Lara* by Bernardine Evaristo, *Anita and Me* by Meera Syal or *Every Light in the House Burnin'* by Andrea Levy. Makis points her finger at typical Greek-Cypriot cultural characteristics, sometimes lovingly exploring them, at other times ridiculing or condemning them for their oppressiveness. The novel offers an especially compelling discussion of the culture's gender bias and double standards when it comes to a woman's limited as opposed to a man's unlimited choices.

In the face of the lively literary production by members of other immigrant communities in Britain, a Greek-Cypriot voice has so far been conspicuously absent and it is thanks to Eve Makis that Cyprus and its specific narrative is finally firmly placed on the literary map. To my knowledge Eve Makis has not received any critical attention in academic circles so far even though she was voted the Young Booksellers International Book of the Year 2005. In this paper I therefore wish to explore the specificities of an Anglo-Cypriot voice and narrative within the context of British multicultural literary production addressing issues such as cultural and gender identity, hybridity, memory and the past, the significance of food, the representation of Britishness.



**James Tar Tsaaio (U Ibadan)**

**The Exilic as Elixir? The Ambiguity of exile in the poetic imagination of Tanure Ojaide**

Tanure Ojaide is a multiple award-winning poet-scholar who lives and teaches in the United States of America. As a Nigerian who lives in 'exile', his poetry engages the complex of issues that under-gird exilic discourse in an increasingly postmodernist global neighbourhood. These include the complexities and contradictions of living away from the 'homeland' as a nomadic subjectivity and yet feeling nostalgic and irresistibly drawn to it. The paper proposes that exile possesses the potentials of engendering a sense of longing for the native place and that of belonging to an adopted 'home'. It benefits from the poet's *When It No Longer Matters Where One Lives* as analytic paradigm and underscores the ambiguity that mediates exile especially in Ojaide's poetic imagination.

**Daria Tunca (U Liège)**

**'We die only once, and for such a long time': Translocation as paradigm in Chris Abani's *Song for Night***

The novella *Song for Night*, published by Nigerian author Chris Abani in 2007, may be considered 'translocal' in more than one respect. First of all, and most conspicuously, the work transcends the boundaries of the local by situating itself at a crosscultural crossroads, a claim that can be evidenced simply by juxtaposing the book's text and paratext. Indeed, while the narrative recounts the story of a young soldier during the Biafran War, none of the epigraphs belong to the tradition of African literature: the first introductory quotation, borrowed in the title of this paper, is by seventeenth-century French playwright Molière, and the second, which reads 'on any path that may have heart. There I travel', was authored by Peruvian-American writer Carlos Castaneda.

These paratextual elements may at first sight appear to be of marginal relevance, yet they are central in identifying the book's second, and most challenging, translocal feature. Both citations indeed deal with travelling – in Molière's case, the journey is the ultimate one, i.e. death – and their meanings converge to illustrate the main concerns of Abani's narrative, since the novella progressively reveals that the young hero travelling in search of his lost comrades is in fact no longer alive, and that the expedition depicted in the narrative is an imaginary march towards death. Crucially, what the reader initially assumes to be a movement in space turns out to be an experience situated at a single site of translocation – the boundary between life and death.

The 'translocation-as-locus' motif rapidly develops into an analytical paradigm when considered against the background of the novella's other thematic concerns, such as the relationship between language and reality. In this paper, I wish to argue that a model built around a comprehensive understanding of translocation would provide a more fruitful framework for the examination of *Song for Night* than textbook postcolonial approaches would, as the latter tend to concentrate exclusively on the cultural facets of geographical movements. I hope to show that the adoption of a theory based on an

inclusive interpretation of the notion of translocation can help to capture the complexity of some of the universal components of Abani's fiction, including the exploration of innocence and guilt.

**Sandra Vacca (St. Andrews)**

### **Representing immigration: The example of the Cité Nationale de l'Histoire de l'Immigration, Paris, France**

In 2007, the Cité Nationale de l'Histoire de l'Immigration opened its doors in Paris. This project has been planned since 2001 and responds to political and social needs in a country that is facing increasing xenophobia and social instability. It aims at rehabilitating immigration as part of French history and identity but also at changing mentalities. It seemed important to its creators to give a good image of immigration to the general public while encouraging research and debate on the topic at a national level.

Immigration has long been ignored in France and it is suddenly exposed to the general public through a centre entirely dedicated to the topic. This paper aims at clarifying which angle the CNHI has chosen to take, and what image is given of the immigrants. It explores how successful the CNHI is in fulfilling its objectives, and analyses the methods used by the museum to elaborate a positive image of immigration. The analysis focuses on the display strategies used by the CNHI (which items/photographs are chosen, how they are technically displayed, and with what storyline) and questions their efficiency. Drawing on examples of artworks and display cases, the study explains why the museum has a tendency to give a sense of 'otherness' when displaying immigrants' lives and histories. The study finally questions the very concept of an 'immigrants culture' and whether it is possible to avoid creating a hierarchy within different communities of immigrants by over-representing some over the others.

**Jessica Voges (U Münster)**

### ***Laughter movens***

With descriptions like 'funny', 'witty', or 'hilarious', book covers of contemporary Black British literature underline the humorous character of these texts. What is often left unsaid, though, is not only the significance of stimuli that evoke laughter, but also its effects. Apart from physical stimuli like a tickle, for example, there are also socio-cultural stimuli that function as initiators for laughter. In this context, laughter will be seen as a speech act that is the response to a specific stimulus. The performative aspect of laughter enables the individual to establish group belonging, to overcome cultural barriers, and to avoid cultural conflict.

In connection to postcolonial translocations, the analysis of laughter in literary texts is extremely interesting with regard to the shifting of contexts through laughter. Focussing on socio-cultural stimuli to evoke laughter, the individual can adapt codes and conventions of a foreign group by responding to the specific stimuli. This response to the stimulus may cause a feeling of group belonging, for example. Thus, as a speech act, laughter has transformative power as the individual's context and surrounding of the situation are changed by laughter.

Therefore, the paper will show not how things can be done with words, but also with laughter.

**Christine Vogt-William (U Atlanta)**

**Of cane and the Kala Pani: Addressing indentureship in contemporary Indo-Caribbean diasporic women's novels**

Translocality is intrinsic to the works of Indo-Caribbean women writers like Ramabai Espinet and Marina Budhos – two authors who have found it imperative to recall and inscribe the old diasporas in their creative fictions. Ramabai Espinet's *The Swinging Bridge* and Marina Budhos' *The Professor of Light* examine the journeys of indentured labourers to Trinidad and Guyana from India, showing the relevance of ancestral diasporic experience for the more contemporary diasporic frameworks of their female protagonists. The ambivalences inherent in the tracking of migration histories and cultural knowledges, in the juxtaposition of the past and the present, are evident in these novels. The inscription of these 'kala pani' histories and the ensuing 'cane' epistemologies initiate and sustain self-reflexive identificatory processes in the protagonists, who are total strangers to the subcontinent and as such to 'Indianness' – an elusive cultural resource to those who are doubly diasporic. I propose in this paper that the protagonists' engagement with their ancestors and their diasporic histories are transcultural exercises, endowing certain memories and cultural features with meaning which help to shape their own identities in present-day diasporic contexts.

**Roland Walter (U Recife)**

**Transcultural crossroads: Diaspora memory and identity in contemporary new world African fiction**

This essay examines the term New World African diaspora as a cultural space of interstitial belonging, cutting across diverse ethno-racial, gendered, and geographical border(land)s. Constituted by a variety of shifting places (multi-locality), this diasporic space is home to a transcultural consciousness. It problematizes how this consciousness is re-created and characterized in select creative works by M. Nourbese Philip, Émile Ollivier, Toni Morrison, Patrick Chamoiseau, Miriam Alves and Ana Maria Gonçalves. Its main objective is to problematize the relation between nature and memory as well as between environmental, epistemic and physical violence as an ongoing effect of (neo)colonial power relations. In the process, the term 'transwriting' is introduced as a revisionary mnemonic process of discursive identity construction linking contemporary Afro-Canadian, Afro-American, Afro-Caribbean, and Afro-Brazilian literature.

**Sharon Wang (USC, Los Angeles)**

**Parting with the father who knows best: Ang Lee's *Lust, Caution***

A filmmaker whose works are generally categorized as Taiwan's 'second-wave new cinema,' Ang Lee is considered transnational in the sense that he is known both for his successful Hollywood films and the

films that explore themes of alienation and loss in Taiwan's experiences of modernization. In emphasizing the connection between visibility and (self)-representation of culture, Shumei Shih's readings of Ang Lee's *Wedding Banquet*, *Pushing Hands*, and *Eat Drink Man Woman* contend that different promotional strategies of the films are indeed a performance of flexible citizenship.

This paper considers the way such translatability operates in the 2008 film *Lust, Caution*. A success both in Taiwan and the U.S., *Lust, Caution* appeals to Taiwanese audience not only because it is an adaptation of one of the works of the cultural icon, Eileen Chang. The 'nostalgic thrust' of this film, if any, comes from the fact that it brings in a romantic element to the war-torn and decadent Shanghai in the 40s. Set in the tragic context of China's semi-colonial situation, Shanghai is re-presented as sentimental, dream-like, and feminine. In examining both the diegetic and extra-diegetic parts of *Lust, Caution*, this paper reflects on the following questions: how does the production and consumption of the romantic images of China speak to the instability of Taiwanese identity? To what extent does the canonization of Ang Lee's works redefine the 'Taiwanese experience'? And finally, what is at stake behind the Taiwanese audience's embrace of Ang Lee as its national pride and its acknowledgement of him as a Hollywood filmmaker?

**Ina Wester (U Kath. Eichstätt)**

#### **Beverley Naidoo's *The Other Side of Truth*: A modern fairy tale of loss?**

In 2000 the novel *The Other Side of Truth* was published by Beverley Naidoo, a South African author. Being born as a middle-class member of the white ruling class, she grew up on the other side of the fence. Having become an activist of the anti-apartheid movement, she was put in solitary confinement for eight weeks in 1964 and was later evicted from the country in 1965. Naidoo left for England, where she became a teacher, lecturer and author.

Her engagement with humanitarian causes led her to write *The Other Side of Truth* about the fate of refugees in England. The questions that are to prevail in this paper are if Naidoo wrote a modern fairy tale and in how far established African oral traditions influenced her and mingled with classical European traditions. In a second step, it shall be analysed in how far this novel treats the psychological concept of 'loss' through universal and particular symbols.

**Birte Wiemann (U Hull)**

#### **'Here is unfenced existence': Geographical and cultural translocation in the work of Philip Larkin**

Only a year ago *The Times* in the UK picked Philip Larkin to lead the list of 'The Greatest British Writers Since 1945'. Despite the term 'British' in the list's title, many critics still perceive Larkin as the quintessentially *English* poet. Seamus Heaney calls Larkin one of 'the hoarders and shorers [...] of Englishness.' Tom Paulin reads Larkin's 'At Grass' as a particularly English reaction to the loss of the Empire, and Bruce King states that Larkin's poetry is concerned with 'provincial life in the Midlands and the north of England.' If, however, Larkin is such an English poet, how does this explain that he wrote

some of his best poems during his five years in Belfast in the early 50s? In my paper, I would like to illuminate how Larkin's relocation to Northern Ireland was one of the most important steps to establish Larkin as a poet for whom place is only rarely geographical place. In a second step, I would like to show how German translations of Larkin's work suddenly fix his poems in a particular geographical framework – something that is not realised in the original poems. Thus, questions of not only geographical but also of cultural translocation within poems and their translations are raised enabling us to see Larkin as what he is: a cosmopolitan poet, not (only) an English one.

**Dirk Wiemann (U Potsdam)**

**Cosmopolitanism: (On) whose term(s)?**

Walter Mignolo's largely overlooked notion of a 'critical cosmopolitanism' defines this latter as 'a set of projects toward planetary conviviality'. Inextricably linked with the very coloniality it opposes, critical cosmopolitanism operates on the epistemic principle of 'border thinking' from the exteriority of modernity – i.e., from the outside that is needed by the inside. Border thinking effectively introduces 'diversality' as an alternative logic to the universalising terms of 'abstract cosmopolitanism' whose content, in Mignolo's perspective, is always already defined and possessed by hegemonic movers of 'global designs'.

In my presentation I would first wish to introduce and critically engage with Mignolo's scenario, whose major pitfall I see in its exclusion of the non-subaltern from critical cosmopolitanism. In a second move I would like to show how the engagement with literary texts may tie in with and foster 'border thinking' even from the inside of modernity. For this I will turn to three different (critically cosmopolitan) readings of the fiction of Mahasweta Devi. While Gayatri Spivak proceeds from Devi to a reflection of her own concept of planetarity, Lawrence Buell attempts to deprovincialise his US-centred ecocritical agenda by taking recourse to Devi's own bioregionalism. Meanwhile, Sara Ahmed demonstrates her ethico-political programme of the 'generous/productive encounter' by offering an intimate journal of her own engagement with Devi's texts. While all three responses shift the terms of the debate on cosmopolitanism into Mignolo's direction, they simultaneously perform border thinking from loci of enunciation that Mignolo does not foresee.

**Daniel Benjamin Williams (U Heidelberg)**

**No fixed abode: Movement and consent in J. M. Coetzee**

As apartheid South Africa entered its violent 'emergency' years, a quiet novel about migration, dispossession, and civil war appeared on the scene: *Life & Times of Michael K* (1983), by J. M. Coetzee. Alongside allusions to historical displacements, this novel dramatizes the legal and ethical consequences of restrictions on movement – particularly under the apartheid 'pass system.' I discuss Coetzee's work in this context, paying attention to the theme of 'consent' and its role in discussions about human rights, political obligation, and the body. First, I position the juridical concept of consent, especially 'tacit consent,' in its theoretical context (Grotius, Hobbes, and Locke) and point to the importance of free

movement in its operation. Further, I analyze certain conventions and structures in customary international (humanitarian) law, arguing for a parallel between discourses of rights (e.g., Geneva) and international agreements concerning traffic and the movement of persons (e.g., Vienna). Second, I argue that consent often relies on the spatial paradigms of property, which compromise its ideological neutrality. In both these approaches, I emphasize the body as 'the matter of consent,' and suggest parallels between human situations regarding consent/contract and the idea of 'animal life' that is often present in Coetzee's work.

**Cosima Wittmann (U Frankfurt/M)**

### **Of love cakes and Christmas turkeys: Translocal food in Sri Lankan literature**

Ceylon as the 'island of spices' was greatly coveted by three European colonial powers, who colonised it for a total of four hundred and fifty years and exploited its wealth, not only in spices. Although it is common knowledge that European cuisine was influenced by the import of exotic spices and other tropical products as well as by specialised methods of cooking (curry), it is less well known that Ceylonese cuisine in turn incorporated previously unknown European elements such as the baking of cakes. This translocation of food culture from Portugal, the Netherlands, and Britain to Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) can be traced through specific recipes. While some Sri Lankan cookbooks give cultural insight into translocation and adaptation processes to local conditions and needs, it is in novels that these dishes take on a cultural dynamic of their own. This paper sets out to explore some of these translocal processes and their literary representations, by combining cultural studies approaches and close readings of both cookbooks and Sri Lanka novels set in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century such as Carl Muller's *The Jam-Fruit Tree* (1993) and Romesh Gunasekera's *Reef* (1994).

**Eric A. Anchimbe (U Bayreuth)**

### **Discursive construction of the other online**

The virtual world has continued to gain prominence in the last several years. It is now a platform for constructing identities, building communities, and re-uniting displaced societies, which all involve constructing an in-group and pitting it against (an)other group(s). Postcolonial identities in Cameroon have now also moved into virtual spaces where Anglophones and Francophones either clash or construe each other in different ways. Cameroon is an odd case in the postcolonial notion of states. It does not place itself generally on the common binary of indigenous vs. ex-colonial heritages but rather on two ex-colonial heritages: French (Francophones) and English (Anglophones).

This paper intends to show how Anglophones conceive of and construct the Francophones in online discourse. They regard the Francophones as enemies, oppressors, colonisers, and as indelibly linked to France: cf. 'La République Française du Cameroun,' as M Nje says below. The data used is from two online interactive features: *The Post Online* newspaper and *Scribbles from the Den* (Dibussi Tande). On the pages of these websites readers react to news stories from and on Cameroon, as well as to comments

made by others. As the examples show, focus will be on how Anglophones construct the Francophones and how this places them outside the in-group, Anglophone: Francophones are part of *La République*, they are at the origin of the *subordinate status* attributed to Anglophones, and so forth.